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HAIL, COLUMBIA !

## Books by W. L. GEORGE

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*Hail, Columbia!*

*Caliban*

*Woman and To-morrow*

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*The Strangers' Wedding*

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*The Making of an Englishman*

*The Intelligence of Woman*

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*The Stiff Lip*

*etc.*

# HAIL, COLUMBIA!

BY

W. L. GEORGE

LONDON

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1923

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DEDICATED IN FRIENDSHIP  
TO  
SIR LIONEL PHILLIPS, BART.



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## PREFACE

WHEN a stranger, visiting a foreign country, devotes to his journey less than ten months, and when he then writes a book upon that country, he feels inclined to apologize to its citizens. It is not that he doubts his own ability to understand what he has seen, nor that he is uncertain in the judgments which arise therefrom; if he has for himself the respect that a respectable man deserves, he must believe that he has written a worthy book. Only, after a short visit, he must tell himself that a great deal must have escaped him. I, who visited a considerable portion of the United States, cannot help thinking: "You went from Maine to Nebraska, from New York to Georgia, from Georgia to Texas, Kansas, Illinois. You know something of Ohio, Pennsylvania, Missouri, California . . . but what of Wyoming and Colorado? and you didn't stay long in Virginia. And Seattle looks awfully exciting on the map." That's the trouble. One wonders whether one's opinions would not have been varied by more extended experience. One feels presumptuous; one tells oneself that one cannot condense within those few months the necessary experience, and especially

the necessary repose, which would make it possible to arrive at balanced judgments.

That is not quite my state of mind as I lay these chapters before the American public. I quite realize that portions of my journeys have been purely geographic; that I have not had all the contact I should have needed with representative American families, for truly representative families generally keep themselves rather to themselves. I know that my vision of the social life must be that of a guest entertained rather specially, with great profusion, with immense cordiality, and that this does not quite indicate the ordinary social life of the Americans. Especially, I realize that I have not lived inside the family, that I have not witnessed the quarrels at breakfast, the young man's moods of depression, nor heard him proclaim in the home circle his ambitions and ideals. I have not been on the inside, but I have been as near to it as I could, nearer, I hope, than most visiting Englishmen, because I wanted to.

That is the main point. I came to America interested only in subsidiary fashion in scenery, business, and politics; I had to take notice of these, but primarily I came over to meet the Americans, to try to understand them, and to take on the easy task of liking them. I did not expect within those months to acquire a perfect understanding of America, for I have lived a middling long life without gaining a complete understanding of my own countrymen. But at least I did begin sympathetically, and so I beg my readers to believe that my

inevitable errors are due to enthusiasm as much as to ignorance. Also, I cannot overstress the fact that nowhere do I venture to lay down conclusions; to do that would be impertinent; all I have attempted is a book of impressions. I have done my best to see things as they are, and to determine their origins, but I had no means of tracing the obscurer impulses in the American temperament; it would have taken me twenty years even to guess at them. So these are only impressions, and they should be taken as such, as the work of a very well-disposed, interested stranger, who hopes that he is intelligent and knows that he is friendly.

That point of friendliness must not be overlooked. Historic rivalry and divergences in social habits have often led Englishmen to cross the Atlantic ready to carp, and I suppose I may say that many Americans have visited England in the same spirit. The result has not only proved superficial, but also adverse to international amity. If a man visits a foreign country, he is not going to judge it fairly unless he makes up his mind to view it at least neutrally. For my part, I went over with a biased mind; I was biased in favour of America. This was not only due to my having been brought up in Paris, where the American girl and the American dollar are very popular; nor was it entirely due to the kindness with which my writings had been received in the States. My bias in favour of America arose from an intellectual process. Long before sailing I had told myself: "If within a century a new country

has reached a population of over a hundred millions; if it has created as many universities as England owns secondary schools; if it has produced Whitman, Edison, Lincoln, Robert Lee, Grant, Whistler, Henry James; if it has grown strong enough to compel the greedy imperialism of Europe to take its hands off the American continent—if it has done all that, that country must hold some greatness.” On these lines I was entitled to assume the greatness of America, and I needed only to discover it. How far I have been able to discover it the following chapters will show.

In this quest I have, so far as possible, avoided generalization. Generalizations are the devil, and yet one cannot quite do without them, so I have tried to attenuate them, to qualify them. That is not merely a trick; I ask the reader to remember that all my qualifications are essential to my process of thought. My whole attitude to facts is: first, to be sure of them; secondly, to check them; thirdly, to have them checked by somebody else, and, when they are established, to doubt them. Notably, I have tried not to generalize in the comparative way which is so common in books of travel. One does it almost unconsciously. One wants to say, “Americans drink ice water, whereas the English. . . .” This seems to me bad observation. The thing to record is that the Americans drink ice water. Who cares whether the English prefer sack or Malmsey? I have tried to take the Americans as I found them, as they were, instead of forcing their reluctant shapes into the English standard mould. Who

are the British, after all, that they should be taken as the human standard?

Not to generalize, not to compare, and to accept things as they impress one—that seems to me the best way of gaining of America a picture not entirely distorted. Also, I did a little preliminary work, which the visiting Englishman should undoubtedly subject himself to! I read a fairly fat book on American history before I landed in the country. And I extracted for memorizing the principal points. I do not pretend that after this I could have matriculated at Princeton, but I did obtain some idea of who was Alexander Hamilton, of the fact that separatism, which broke out in the Civil War, already existed in 1787; I was able to realize the difference of impulse in industrial New England and agricultural Louisiana, and so forth. (The historical method has its dangers, for it tends to make one think that history repeats itself. Which is nonsense. When history repeats itself, it generally stutters.)

Lastly, I have tried to pursue truth, even though since Pilate we have not progressed very far in knowing what it is. I have done my best with the fugitive appearances which masquerade as verity in a fluctuating world. That is the best one can hope to do, and, at least, it is the best man can do for his own self-respect. To blame freely, that is easy enough; to praise with abundance, that is perhaps more difficult. For praise of the foreigner, except for those who think their own country always in the wrong, demands of one a slight imaginative leap. One has to throw aside old preju-



dices and habits, to see things with eyes renewed, eyes almost virginal. One can't quite do it, for the pictures accumulated during one's life haunt one's retina. One can't be born again so easily as that. But one can try; one can conscientiously and continually try. In such a book as this, one may do so with profit and certainly without tremor. A country such as America, so immensely vital, so rich, so ambitious, has less than any in the world a right or a reason to fear the truth.

# HAIL, COLUMBIA!

## I

### IN OLD AMERICA

I BEGIN at Nashua. At Nashua *incipit vita nova*. This is not so paradoxical as the sight of the painted wooden cottages of the little New Hampshire town might suggest; at least I hope that these lines may reveal my impression that in America new life begins everywhere. It is not my fault that I am in Nashua; even before I left England my American friends were receiving with the sympathy due to lunatics the assertion that I intended to visit neither Yellowstone Park, nor the Grand Cañon, nor Niagara, and that neither wild horses nor tame railroads would drag me up the Lehigh Valley. "But," they persist even now, "you'll go to the Rockies. You mustn't miss the Rockies. Oh, do go to the Rockies!" until I wonder whether their adjuration to go to the Rockies does not conceal a desire to rid New England of my presence.

You will ask: "Why this aversion from the natural beauties of America? Is there no poetry in your soul?"

To which I answer : " I feel no hatred for the rolling Mississippi, but what I have come to see is not American territory, but American men and women, not crags or cathedrals, except in so far as they have determined the development of the American citizen. Not monuments, but men, is my simple motto, whose simplicity conceals almost unapproachable ambition. I want to understand the American, to discover the dominant traits of a hundred and five million people, numbering a dozen races, speaking eighty languages, living under climates which here bring ten feet of snow, there nurture the palm tree and the cotton plant.

That is a pretty enterprise, and you will justly say that these Britishers must be rather sure of themselves to come over for ten months on such an errand. To which I will plead guilty, and seek extenuation in the fact that many of my countrymen have given not ten months, but four weeks, and that the results of such haste have been bad from the point of view of international relations. When a misunderstanding arises between a man and a woman it often leads to marriage and happiness; between nations, however, it favours threats of war.

So my task is not to describe features and places, which my readers know better than I do and almost as well as the authors of the guidebooks, but to proceed like this: There are a dozen Americas—within the Federal boundary lies British Massachusetts, where live Americans; Spanish New Mexico and California, where live Americans; Teutonic, Slavic, and Scandi-



navian Middle West, where live Americans. The son of the Polish Jew on First Avenue is an American; the son of the Alabama negro is an American. The son of the Pilgrims at Cape Cod is an American. My desire is to find out what unites these varied people, what keeps them together where no man pursueth, what views are held on one ocean, yet not denied on the other. Briefly, I want to effect a synthesis of the American mentality; to arrive at such a clarity as will enable me to say, "This is an American idea" with as much assurance as I now say, "This is an English idea." Now, this cannot be done by coursing between railway stations. A man's knowledge is not measured by the miles he travels. In this case I feel that all I can do is to select a few patches of America—*viz.*, New England, New York, Chicago, a farm in Kansas, a fruit ranch in California, an oil well in Oklahoma, a Pennsylvania mansion, and to cancel those traits which do not appear in all of them. The tendencies, the ideas which recur everywhere will indicate (as nearly as human vanity can tolerate truth) the main lines of impressions, and then I may be entitled to suggest that these co-ordinations make up the picture, that the result is the real America. That is why I stand in Nashua, interested in two old Colonial houses whose shallow verandas rest on slender pillars; I cannot see through the prudent lace of the curtains, and yet I must learn to see, if ever I am to understand this American people, of which I can say already that it finds no rival to its charm, except its strangeness.

As I came up the road into Nashua from the station lower on the line I had an instance of strangeness: I found a man lying on the grass under a tree. He was neither smoking nor sleeping nor reading. He merely lay under a tree, presumably thinking. You will gauge the effect upon me of the three days in New York and the four in New England which prefaced this incident when I tell you that I found it amazing that an American should lie under a tree doing nothing. I had been going about for a week, and while in England you will everywhere behold people doing nothing (and doing it with great intensity), in America this sad spectacle is very rare. For a moment I wondered if the man were dead. That would be one explanation. Or he might be English, which would be another explanation. But he hailed me to ask the time in a language that is fast growing familiar. No, the idle man was American. There is no explanation; so I enter him here as the exception which proves the rule that Americans are always active because they are invariably vital.

Few Americans conceive the effect of their vitality upon the English writer who meditated in Nashua. At first America was awful. It was like being posted. I was bagged by the pier officials, stamped by the customs, sorted by porters, rebagged by a taxi, restamped by the reception clerk, and at incredible speed delivered into a bedroom through something that looked like a mine shaft. And the Elevated roared, the locomotives rang their bells, the trolley cars and the omnibuses rang something else. And when I

tried to be funny because my room number was 1922, and (forgetting the date) said, "That's handy to remember; same number as the year," the porter reproved me with: "No, not this year. *Next* year." Even my bedroom was a year ahead of the period! I realized that I really was in America.

It isn't so bad as that in Nashua, even though it possesses factories. But even here there is activity—things are made, dispatched; their owners telephone; women think of careers; young men buy automobiles; and people walk with decision, as if they were busier in Nashua than we in London town. I am smitten by the restlessness, the enthusiasm, the passion for improvisation of this amazing America; I realize, vaguely, all sorts of new qualities that contradict one another—warm heart and cool mind, audacity and prudence, organization and makeshift. I feel an America so ruthless that she will strip me of my shirt, an America so kindly that she will give me a better shirt than I could buy. As if among the nations she were Robin Hood.

I do not suppose that the pie belt<sup>1</sup> would be recommended to me as the best place in which to study America, except from the historical point of view. But recommendations never worry very much a writer who acquires his facts as the wolf gets his salt—*viz.*, through the circulatory system of his captures. And history has its value as an *hors-d'œuvre* before the more important dish of one's own period. I began with

<sup>1</sup> New England.

New England so as to resist the overwhelming pull of New York, and I began badly, on the following lines of Whittier :

Oh! may never a son of thine,  
Where'er his wandering steps incline,  
Forget the sky which bent above  
His childhood, like a dream of love,  
Or hear unmoved the taunt of scorn  
Breathed o'er the brave New England born.

As I dislike poetry—which impresses me as the coward's escape from the difficulties of prose, through the back door of melody—I cannot say whether this is one of the couplets that should never have been rhymed, but I objected to its rhapsodic air. Also, several New-Englanders at once assured me that their childhood was not overhung by a dream of love. But, though they were all sober people, who evoked the gentler side of their Scottish temperament, they did set up for me another picture, which I venture to call “The Hypnosis of History,” of “The Legend of New England.” Subsequently a few New-Yorkers and Westerners showed that they had accepted the legend.

You may ask what I mean by the “hypnosis” of history. One might answer in a sentence that the educated American is infinitely more conscious of his national origin than is the denizen of any other part of the world. The past of his country acts as the shadow of his present and the danger signal of his future. For instance, where an American can trace back his pedigree several generations, he will almost invariably reveal the fact to his English guest—exhibit the crest

on his signet ring, the arms on a piece of old plate, and dilate a little sentimentally on the virtues and sufferings of his forbears. One strand in the psychology of this impulse is undoubtedly to make the English visitor feel at home among heirs of an identical tradition; the other, and more important strand, is the romantic reverence the American feels for the pioneers. America knows three main sources of romance—love, business, and the pioneer.

Thus, the American gives relief to traditions that his English cousin assumes or to which he is indifferent until they are attacked; in the matter of descent he is not cynical, and seldom holds the French point of view—that it may be as well if one doesn't know one's great-grandfathers, as one of the four would be bound to be disreputable. Indeed, the pedigreed American, call himself a democrat if he likes, knows and cares much more about the ancient local families than does the Englishman. As a rule, he knows his local history; he entreats you not to miss Emerson's house at Concord, describes the contents of the Salem East India Museum, and knows the casualties at the Lexington riot. Almost invariably he forgets the South, and seldom has a memory for the pioneers who were wiped out at Jamestown; the *Mayflower* and its cargo of prayer books and ploughshares serve him as the mythology that all men must create who would capture illusion.

It is mythology! I listen, and all about me in the hotel youthful Americans, big sophomores and boyish



plebes, fluffy girls and young matrons, play golf, tennis, croquet; ride, bathe, paddle canoes, dance, drive automobiles, airplanes; but also declare that So-and-so is on the pig's back, while Millicent knows how to hand out the dope. I listen to the friend who describes the record where it is stated that John Robinson . . . and wonder what it is preserves the capacity to nurture the belief that New England still exists. New England does not seem to me to exist, save in the shape of a Newer England that the romantics do not perceive.

It was in Salem that I asked myself what it was supported the legend of New England; what mosses held together the roof of the old manse. This does not mean that I project an attack on New England, but it must be recalled that an Englishman cannot be as much impressed by Old America as by New America. The thing America has to be proud of is not its past, but its present, and I wish that I could whole-heartedly say that this applies to England too. Still, it seems that America does not hold this view, and that she is still attached to the idea of old Puritan New England. Even in Chicago, even in half-Indian corners of Oklahoma, I find reverence for New England. And when I consider Chicago, for instance, I am amazed that anything of this reverence should survive. I suspect that the moss which holds together the old manse is of two kinds. One is architectural.

The city-bred American, living on the eighteenth floor most of the day, naturally feels a romantic attraction for the wooden cottages that lie between New

York and Maine. It is charming architecture this cottage architecture of wooden slats painted white, or grey, or green, or even yellow; the verandas supported upon fluted pillars, the little Doric pediments and cornices, the fanlights over the panelled doors. All this is intimate; and when such a village is grouped around a wooden church which in miniature recalls the designs of Sir Christopher Wren, one understands the attraction of what I venture to call an emotional picture postcard. And of the more massive houses (such as those of Newport, New Hampshire), and many that you find in Salem and Concord, comfortable, boxlike edifices of brick, with a palladian magnificence of column and a cool purity of Colonial style, all this is rather more England than New England, and so it is wonderful that it should help to create illusion.

The second support of the legend of New England is, I suppose, found in the remains of the New England character. This character has, I hope, not been defined by Mr. Van Wyck Brooks, who says that, after being drained of vital life into the West, the New England character "passed into the condition of neurotic anæmia in which it has remained so largely to this day." I cannot rival Mr. Brooks in information, but I will venture to confront him in impression. So far as there is a New England character it suggests to me a rather Scottish type: there is in the speech and attitude of the New England farmer an air of moderation and reserve, tinged with a little suspicion, and informed with a certain kindness.

I stayed some time in a New England village and all did whatever I wanted them to do, but invariably after saying that they were not quite sure it could be done. It was a silent place, whose social life was concentrated round the drug store, to which young men and women seemed to escape for mild giddiness suitable to their age. But, in the main, there was no giddiness. There was a suggestion that here were people still holding on hard to some land they had conquered with difficulty. Many tales were told of a local character whom I will call Hiram Jebbison, who, in the view of the village, was the real New-Englander. Hiram was a wonderful man. One day he sold a local landowner some buffaloes for his park. The beasts went sick, and, very kindly, Hiram offered to take them back. He said he would isolate them on a little island in a lake, which belonged to him. "Of course," added Hiram, "you will let your men build a little bridge to the island for me to get them over." The landowner agreed. Hiram then took twenty of the landowner's men, tons of his lumber, and built a bridge. When that was done he told the landowner that of course the buffaloes would want shelter. The landowner agreed. So Hiram took more of the landowner's men and more tons of his lumber to build a shanty on the island. When the buffaloes felt better, Hiram sold them to somebody else ; then he sold the island, the bridge, and the shanty, which had cost him nothing at all.

That might be a Scotch story. Another tale of Hiram is Scotch too : A raw sportsman from New York



engaged Hiram to go hunting elk. An elk was shot, and the amateur, pretending to know all about it, demanded the leg. Hiram said not a word, gave him the leg and kept the valuable part, the loin. When the sportsman complained that he had been unable to get a knife into his choice, Hiram merely replied, "I could have told you that"; but he had said nothing, for Hiram Jebbison never said anything unnecessary.

I suspect that these traits and the stories they give rise to help to sustain the legend of New England. A visit to a remote village enhances the legend. There was an auction in our village, one morning, where the auctioneer began by putting up a red flag marked with his name. Then a small boy went round the village, languidly beating a small drum to announce that something was going to happen. Nothing much happened, for the sale was of old furniture, spare parts, and rusty nails. But two things were interesting. In spite of the gabble of the auctioneer, "I've fifty, give me sixty—I've only the fifty, give me fifty-five," etc., no bid of one dollar was ever made, even for articles which ended at ten. The cautious New-Englander always started at fifty cents, and nobody ever raised more than a nickel. The other fact was that, to my amazement, at that auction I met Uncle Sam. I thought he was dead; that he had been replaced by the new American, short and sturdy, inclined to stoutness, with a round or square head, and rather large eyes. But Uncle Sam still lives in New England with a long, tanned, hard face, a bony nose and a goatee. With him came Colonel

Cody, with his ferocious little eye and his leg-of-mutton beard. Figures of legend! And they maintain the legend in the mind—they will not maintain it long. For New England is dead. It is being slain by Newer England, by an industrial New England which knows nothing of the Pilgrim. In those states you will find factories that are twenty to thirty years old; you will find new industries. Not only in Connecticut, at Bridgeport, for instance, do you find them making the gramophone, or building engines, but at all sorts of places inland, at Nashua, at Lowell, even about the sacred precincts of Concord and Salem. A visit to Salem must be a tragedy for the sentimentalist. You go along Andover Street, or Federal Street, or into Washington Square, and look at all these houses of gentlefolk, their pleasant colonnades; you glance at the settees and at the Colonial porches, and suddenly you emerge into an industrial town with trolley cars, tenements, and smokestacks. A crude sign by the railway says, "Stop, Look, and Listen." One still more crude merely says, "Look Out." Old Salem did not have to look out, and now, to my mind, it is no more. It is no more because the old New-Englander, who came from England and Scotland, has been completely swamped by the masses of foreign population which have followed the factories. I met Poles in Vermont, Italians in Concord; Bridgeport has its Hungarian—its Chinese, quarter; the rasping English of the past has given place to the lisping languages of the South and East. Near the ancient grounds stand

the self-service restaurants, the automatic bars, and the movies. The movies in Salem!

I went down to Marblehead, and I saw it on an exquisite day, when the sea was cygnet grey, spangled with furled sails, and a mauve mist held over the islets in the bay. Romance in Hergesheimerland . . . Lovis's Cove, and the landing of the British . . . this illuminated spot, what does it mean now? I don't think it means anything at all. The immigrants have swept it all away. I know that the romantic will reply that the immigrants came because sturdy New England had established democratic freedom in this corner of the world. I doubt it. The Europeans left Europe because they were fleeing from something worse than tyranny; they were fleeing from poverty; indeed, in the 'forties they were fleeing from famine, and, later on, from the crowded conditions of their own birth rate. So they came to New England and went to the West; they went to the warmer lands first, and that is why they came to America instead of to Canada. It was not freedom, but free land which brought them across the Atlantic, and if there had been no Revolution, if the United States to-day were a British dominion, the immigrants would have come all the same.

I realize that the rough qualities of New England have leavened the whole of America, for already I have met their descendants in the Middle West, but what a slight leaven it is among these enormous masses of Scandinavians, Germans, Italians! So slight that

the New England speech has disappeared in the rest of America, that the lean body has been obscured by a sturdy envelope, the cautious temperament replaced by the temperament of the most dashing commercial adventurers the world has seen. New England made the beacon that lighted America, but it was a beacon made of lumber; now modern America feeds the fire with kerosene. Nothing remains of the New England influence except a vacillating Puritanism, which comes up suddenly in the prosecution of a book, in a cry against skimpy bathing dresses—a Puritanism which leaps up and down like the flame of a dying candle. The New England temperament has filled its part in the American play; history is not likely to cast it again.

I suppose that the full spirit of New England is now to be found in Boston, and there will the last ramparts stand when all the nations of the world, congregated in the States, come lapping round. One has an impression of aloof aristocracy in what remains of Old Boston, and the impression is all the stronger owing to the invisibility of the inhabitants. One can stand in Louisburg Square, and not a face appears at the windows. I ate the bread of Bostonians, and so may not speak of them, but one, a stranger, I may mention and do not forget. He came out of his house one morning and stood upon the steps for a moment, looking to the right and left. As he did not seem to know where he wanted to go, I felt at once that he must be an aristocrat. He was about fifty, well groomed,



with rather delicate features, and he carried a small, brown-paper parcel which seemed to embarrass him. When he perceived me he flung me a look of such dislike that I wondered whether he might not be English. And so we stood for a moment, I looking at him; after all, a cat can look at a Bostonian aristocrat. Then I asked him my way, being lost, as usual, and his glance revealed a still greater repulsion. He was quite unlike the ordinary American I had been meeting, who goes out of his way to show you yours, who takes your arm, draws plans, almost offers to pay your car fare.

While he hesitated, I explained that I was a stranger in Boston, and a change came over his features. "Oh," he said, doubtfully, "are you English?" On my saying "Yes" the change grew more marked, and I perceived that it was a virtue to be English. We talked a little and, as if guided by an instinct, I spoke of a recent visit to a Sussex town where the grass grows between the cobbles of the street. The aristocrat then gave me a smile. Following upon a compliment addressed to his house, he opened the door and showed me his hall, which is panelled in oak and delicately furnished with old mahogany and ancient china, but he did not ask me in, as would have a modern American. Instead, he talked guardedly. He even advised what I should see in Boston . . . and he recommended nothing that did not lie between the Massachusetts Hospital and Copley Square; there was nothing else. When I told him that I was going to the Middle West

he seemed tempted not to reply. Then, hesitating, "You will find it strange." He would not explain any more. He did not want to bury the Middle West, but he could not praise it. He revealed that he had never been west of Ohio, but he had paid visits to England, Italy, and France. His wife, it appeared, was an American, born in France. So we exchanged a few remarks on French literature and English politics that were not very profound, until, as he expanded on his homes beyond the water, I had the courage to ask him how he liked living in America. I think he was a little shocked; this was obviously one of the things one did not discuss. He tried to escape me, as would have an Englishman, by talking of the neighbourhood, of the country club, alluding to horses, and praising golf, but I persisted in my investigation until, almost churlishly, he replied, "Well, one need only mix with the people one likes." And then I understood him; I understood his reluctant love for changing America. I was able to imagine the life of these surviving Anglo-Americans, whose visiting list spreads only a mile, excepting cousins at Lexington; who still drink tea; who say "Bosston," and not "Bawston"; who keep their panelled door tight locked, and behind it live persistently in lavender and dimity; who have an account with a bookseller in Piccadilly; who receive letters edged with an inch of black when a French marquis dies; whose sons go to Harvard, failing Oxford, and marry the daughter of a dean, see their incomes shrink, and live on, disdainful and forgotten,

under the shadow of an academic wall, and are gentlemen to the end.

For, indeed, as I come to understand better the great Irish city which hides under the old English reputation of Boston, I cannot help feeling, and I feel it without undue regret, that the remaining representatives of the period of organdie, port wine, and square dances are milestones on the road which leads back three periods in a country where no man and no woman seems to run the risk of ever being turned into a pillar of salt. Charming, courtly, and cultured, these aristocrats seem to be only shadows. They are the end, and upon their graves can be inscribed as a parody of Kosciuszko the words, "*Finis Bostoniæ!*"

The legend of New England is not the only one which the travelling Englishman encounters. He also has to reckon with what I may call the legend of Boston. But there is a difference: the legend of New England he discovers only when he reaches the American shores; the legend of Boston he brings in his own kit bag. It is rather a difficult legend to define. More or less, the English idea of Boston is that it is an England beyond the water, the place where academic learning is supreme; where refinement, tea parties, Toryism, mingle with vestiges of fox hunting into producing an agreeable England of the George III period. The Englishman is convinced, as a rule, that outside Boston there exist in America no manners, but only morals; that Boston is included in the United States only by a misunderstanding; and that it is the

spiritual home of the deans of Harvard; it is, shall we say, Sussex or Westmoreland. The casting of those tea chests in Boston Harbour on a fine morning in the eighteenth century is forgotten. Briefly, the Englishman feels affectionate about Boston, affectionate to the point of sentimentality.

Now, this is not entirely untrue, and I think I perceived this ghost of Boston an hour after I arrived. It was a Sunday morning, and under my window passed a little elderly lady dressed in satin of a colour that was something between pink and mauve. The costume included a very tight bodice, with a collar closing about the neck, and the front part was abundantly garnished with white embroidery. On the top of her head was a little pork-pie hat. Between her small hands, gloved in kid, she carried a prayer book and a hymn book. Her boots I could not see (in her period one did not see a lady's boots), but they may have been elastic-sided. As she trotted off I told myself, "There goes the slender ghost of England's own Boston." Indeed, the Boston of old is fairly well sustained if one is careful to visit only those parts of Boston which are haunted by the ghosts. Superficially, Old Boston does support the illusion that it is Old England. In the first place, the town is built of brick or of some solid material plastered with terra cotta. Some of the middle nineteenth-century portions look just like the worst examples of South Kensington architecture, or even Dublin, which, as all English people know, is the most Victorian of our cities.



Farther on, quite close to well-to-do houses, you find slums that might come straight from Westminster, black, tumble-down, and sordid. Then, suddenly, you encounter Beacon Street and Louisburg Square, and Mount Vernon Street; there, among the flat, Colonial windows and the exquisite fanlights, the whole thing hardly modified by the demands of the hot weather, you tell yourself again: "This is not America. This is Bath." Indeed, one might sum up by saying that Old Boston is a cross between Brighton and Edinburgh. And very magnificent it is. It has an air of repose, as if it slept after action. The only error which the Englishman makes is when he thinks that some day it may wake up.

A good way for the Englishman to maintain the illusion is to go to Harvard. He is pretty clear that Harvard is an inferior sort of Oxford, that it has a certain illegitimate relationship with the English institutions. He is ready to be rather kind to Harvard because he has heard of the wild and woolly colleges of Wisconsin and Illinois, and has a vision of academic seclusion contrasted with an orgy of college yells. He feels that Harvard is rather respectable, and when he is very well informed he considers that Yale also is quite nice, being, shall we say, a cousin fortunately twice removed. So everything depends upon whether your Englishman enters America *via* Boston or *via* New York. If he comes in *via* Boston he stays in his mood of good-tempered patronage, and says that Harvard is not a bad little show; but if he comes in *via* New York,

if he has been chased by the trolley cars, hurled up to the twenty-third floor, and terrified by automobiles which unreasonably insist on taking the right side of the road, he reaches Harvard in a state of extreme relief. He feels this is home. For my part, whose interest in America is not at all represented by tea trays and fluted pillars, but by factories where they can pork, I did not have that sense of relief. I found Harvard charming, with its green spaces and the gay, boxlike red buildings which are dotted about; I liked what one may call the domestic shape of this university. It is intimate, concentrated; indeed, it seems to have rallied; that is an important point in the psychological picture of America which I am trying to arrive at. To an Englishman Harvard (Harvard and Yale are in the same case) does not look like a typical university, because to an Englishman a university must be made up of Gothic buildings. Harvard (and I thank the Stars and Stripes for this) is not Gothic. It is Georgian, and it has the solid, deliberate air of the part of London which we call the Temple. It possesses one building of extreme beauty—Hollis Hall—one of the purest specimens of Georgian architecture that I have ever seen, for it is strong and at the same time it is light. It makes an effective contrast with Emerson Hall, which seems to have been built on plans taken from the waste-paper baskets of several architects. But stones, after all, do not define a university.

My impression of Harvard is taken rather from a few young men, notably a dignified sophomore and

several rather noisy plebes, with whom I spent a week in a small hotel in New Hampshire. They are attractive, this generation that is being produced by Harvard; their manners are charming, frank, diffident, curiously inclined toward the English attitude. There is a difference, of course, for nobody seems able to breathe the air of Columbia, even when it is as rarefied as it is in Boston, without something of the champagne standard imposing itself upon the barley-water point of view of our typical Oxford tutor. Having since that time come into contact with the fuller-blooded product of Chicago, Evanston, and Wisconsin universities, I am conscious that Harvard represents, as I suggested before, a rally of Old America against the rush of New America. There seems to be in the mind of the young Harvard man a desire to maintain the value of learning for the sake of learning, and perhaps to them applies the famous toast of the English professor, who raised his glass and said, "Here's to pure mathematics and may they never be of any damn good to anybody."

By which I do not mean that Harvard is as detached from the current of American life as some of its detractors make out. Harvard represents to me what I would call a semicolon in the American phrase. It represents American reflectiveness and American abstraction. Its undergraduates offer a very sharp contrast with the Yale men, some of whom I met in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and others whom I encountered in the Middle West. The Yale man, though it

is dangerous to generalize, strikes me as the compromise between Old America and New America ; if Harvard is a semicolon in the American phrase, then Yale is the hyphen between the old phrase and the new. It is exactly in America in the same position as Cambridge University is in England. Yale seems to be trying to make the best of both worlds, the Old and the New, while Harvard lifts a quite virile voice in defence of the Old World, being willing to give to the New one nothing more than hostages. The importance of these old universities lies in their definition of Boston, for Yale may be at New Haven, and yet it is quite sufficiently within the orbit of New England. The main import of these universities is that they are still registering a protest against the America which insists on being born. Though Harvard does not look upon the baby with aversion, and though Yale seems quite willing to take its share in nursing it, both of them are, to a certain extent, anachronistic. I cannot help feeling that in America everything tends to become an anachronism unless it has been created in the current year. People say that America has no past ; that is not quite true, but what seems to be true is that America scraps her past as she goes. She is like a soldier on the march who throws aside impedimenta so as to get quicker to his goal.

Several times, as I went back to my hotel, I encountered in Copley Square an unstirred Italian who reclined against a barrow laden with grapes. They were rather nice-looking grapes, at twenty cents a pound, and,



wishing to be very American, I merely said to him, "Half." He filled my bag, maintaining in his mouth a corncob pipe, and took my ten cents without a word. Day after day the Italian so remained in Copley Square, always in the same attitude, his pipe, by some magic, always laden, his barrow always covered, apparently by the same grapes. People went into the free library, the trolley cars rattled by, and a passing dean no doubt resisted the temptation to eat fruit in the street; the Italian cared for none of these things. He was there when I arrived; he was the last thing I noticed as I left Boston. I could not help thinking that this intruder, so assured, so completely established in the ancient city, represented the army of occupation which has taken over Old Boston. Old Boston survives. You will see it, for instance, in the exquisite State House, a classical Georgian building in white stone which shows what the National Gallery in London might have been if it had been built by the artist who created the State House. It survives, yes, as the shell. But a man who did not read the signs of New Boston must indeed be blind. Let him leave the State House and go down to Boston Common. There he may be charmed or amused by listening to a speaker who is trying to agitate an entirely listless public against the danger of Mormonism in the States; he may smile at the old loafer concealed within a wooden swan, who works treadles with his feet and thus paddles people on the ornamental water; he will think the old fellow a curious version of Lohengrin, but he must

not ignore the signs of New Boston built on the ruins of the Old.

On that Common he will find some newly seeded grass into which is stuck a board. And this board does not say, "Please Keep Off the Grass," as it does in Hyde Park; the New Boston board says: "Keep Off the Grass. If you want to roam, join the Navy." That is not at all how they would have put it in the days of Emerson. Also, in the days of Emerson, assuming there had been a subway, there would not have been in Boston the feverish commerciality which has now created shops on the platforms. And, what is much more important, in the days of Emerson you would not have paralleled the phenomenon which is exposed in the Boston telephone book. Happening to want the telephone number of a person whose name began with "O," I came upon the name, "O'Brien." I turned the page, and it was still "O'Brien." The next page was inexorably still "O'Brien." Becoming haunted, I roughly counted the O'Briens; in Boston there are four hundred and eighty O'Briens on the telephone. That means that there are at least five thousand O'Briens not on the telephone; that with their families, twenty thousand Bostonians are called O'Brien. Well, add the O'Byrnes, the O'Connors, the O'Donnells, etc., and what is the conclusion? Boston is an Irish city. If it is *Finis Bostoniæ*, it is the beginning of Limerick. It is also, if I can trust my ears, the beginning of New Russia, New Berlin, New Bohemia, and New Italy. In other words, Boston

has not escaped the fate of cities more renowned for foreign immigration. It has become as foreign a city as Chicago, and it is only because something of its old tradition clings to it that people believe that Boston is still Boston.

I spoke to some Bostonians about this, and none of them denied; indeed, they are sufficiently impressed not even to deplore it. They are resigned; they realize that the Boston in which they live is a precarious delusion; they do not even maintain hypocrisy, and when people give up hypocrisy they are giving up much of their pride. All over the north-east of America something new is rising. In Connecticut, especially, and even in the north of Vermont, you will find the foreign worker overwhelming the Yankee farmer, driving his sons out of work and making his sons such as himself, modifying the physical type of the Yankee; you see the factory buildings of the New America turn Bridgeport into a great industrial city; and now, if you cross Charles River into the poorer and the more industrial Boston, you discover, not the pretenders you met on Beacon Hill, but the skyscrapers and the smokestacks overtopping the librarians and the catalogues. The story is simple enough. New England—and by New England I mean all the country that lies north-east of New York (despite the people who would confine New England to a little district which lies between Gloucester, Worcester, and Plymouth)—was the industrial nursery of the United States, and no doubt it went on very nicely, with hand

labour and elementary machinery, up to the middle of the nineteenth century; but the New America insisted on pushing out toward the west, toward the fort surrounded by shacks, brand-new stores, and rough Lake piers which is now Chicago. Coal and iron appeared in Pennsylvania, oil, natural gas; the little railway which had united Boston with Salem found a terrible brother in the steely serpent which threw out its head, not only toward Chicago, but across the prairie toward the desert of Nebraska. Swiftly industry arose in Pittsburgh and in Illinois.

Those people had no traditions; they had no old factories, no old plants. They had all their brains, all their energy, and no old habits to hamper them. Thus there arose outside New England a new mechanical industry which very soon began to promise ruin to the little factories of Massachusetts. They would have been ruined probably through another cause, which was the loss of their water power, when the demand for pulp for paper compelled the cutting down of the forest of the north; it was the coal of West Virginia that saved New England, but it was the example of the West, and especially of Detroit, which induced New England to save itself. It has saved itself, and I spent a long day in the factories of Bridgeport, particularly at the American Chain Company, to see the most modern automatic plant turning out tire chains; and I saw an almost human dynamo in Massachusetts, a dynamo which warns the negligent human being when it is overloaded, and even switches itself



off when it feels itself dangerously handled. Thus New England has saved itself from the industrial point of view, but in so doing it has transmuted itself. The metaphor of grub, chrysalis, and butterfly is apt to the transformation of Boston and the surrounding states. The old-fashioned people will no doubt say that industrial New England is now in the unpleasant grub state, and that the land we know is the painful result of the sober butterfly which once hovered above the beautiful cottage roofs of Concord. For my part, I doubt it, because it seems to me that modern industry is the soldier who will conquer beauty and ease of life for all men, while the old times merely possessed beauty and comfort for a few men.

The spectacle of New England to-day, and even the spectacle of Boston, with its swarming tenements, its crowds of yelling children, its resounding trolley cars, all this is really sane and splendid and full of promise for a luminous future. I weep no tears over Old Boston that lies in its own dust, nor smile, for instance, at the Boston Mushroom Society. Boston still stands for good taste and for the appreciation of learning. Only it is dangerous to concentrate upon academic Boston, because one may easily forget that within twenty years, if Boston develops on its actual lines, it will be a great industrial city.

The modernism of Boston is found quite as easily as its age. For instance, in the trolley cars you are requested to report not only cases of discourtesy on the part of conductors, but also you are asked to report

commendable acts. That is a revolution; for the old point of view as to labour, which prevails in Europe, is that it should be punished when it does wrong, while the broad American point of view is infinitely more human (though none the less mercenary); it holds that men work best when they are treated in a human way. Old Boston would never have thought of congratulating its conductors. It is New Boston, absorbing the business theories of the West, which seeks to develop in its employees the human qualities of courtesy and kindness. I do not suppose these remarks will mean much to my American readers, for they are accustomed to that point of view, but to an Englishman they must be startling.

Startling, too, is another item in Boston—namely, the office of the *Christian Science Monitor*. It is the most amazing newspaper office in the world; the walls are white, the floors are made of parquet, and carpeted. When you go in you think you are going into a government department closed for the night. But if you enter the sub-editor's room you discover a large place, with about ten desks. Now, in most other newspaper offices you find dirty, whitewashed walls, tables stained with the ink and carved by the knives of generations, masses of dusty papers, six weeks' torn issues on the floor, mixed with the dottels of pipes and hundreds of cigarette stubs. Everybody bellows. Everybody smokes. Nearly everybody swears.

At the *Christian Science Monitor* all work placidly at desks as neat as those of sinecurists; there is no

bustle; there is no noise. In the composing room, even, the compositors are clean and collected; the only noise the Christian Scientists have been unable to repress is that of the linotype machine. Do what they will, it insists upon clanking. Well, I do not want to make out that the *Christian Science Monitor* is an indication of *Finis Bostoniæ*, but in reality it does amount to that, because the *Monitor* point of view is the top notch of industrial work. It represents the discovery that industry need not be noisy, dirty, and ferocious. Some may think that the roaring factories are more damaging to Old Boston, but for my part I suspect that this well-oiled organization goes a step farther and indicates the form which industry is going to take; in that sense, perhaps, the calm sweetness of the labour of that office is attendant upon the funeral of the dusty and musty libraries. The smoke-belching factories may be carrying Old Boston to its grave, but the harmonious organization of this extraordinary modern office is laying a delicate wreath of flowers upon Old Boston's grave. It is a significant contrast after the *Monitor* to go and see Old Boston trying to be New Boston in the shape of the Massachusetts General Hospital.

You find a large site administered on spacious lines housing only three hundred and sixty beds. It gives a good example by treating its nurses well; the nurses' quarters are fit to live in (which, in England, is seldom the case) and the nurses are not sweated. But what is interesting is the elderly quality of it all.

I know that there is nothing elderly in the medical school of the hospital, which is practically the same as that of Harvard, but there is, through moderate payments, a maintenance of an air of gentility. At the Massachusetts Hospital patients are still selected; they are still investigated. It represents something that was fine—namely, the development of so much charity among the rich; that was suitable enough to the graceful feudalism of Old Boston city. But in the New Boston that is lifting its voice in a cry that may ultimately equal the shout of Chicago it represents nothing but survival, and one wonders if it will survive.

Of course it will not survive, for nothing survives, and each one of us takes his turn. Boston may yet snatch from the hand of Chicago the torch of progressive industry, while Chicago may become rich enough to give more thought to the immaterial; it will be able to afford that luxury. Boston may pass from the tradition of James Russell Lowell to the new one of Miss Amy Lowell, while Chicago may cease to respond to the verse of Mr. Carl Sandburg to turn to the polished rhymes of some new Keats. The new poet, looking out over Michigan Boulevard, may dream of Boston and pen melancholy lines to a Grecian urn.

Just as I left Boston, in a noisy modern street, I found a saloon. All was complete, the bar still carrying its signs of whisky and of beer, the seats in front of it, upon their stumps, but no longer laden, the brass rod worn by feet, and the red-plush settees, where

some rested after drinks and some waited before. There was nobody there. Where the bottles used to stand are boards which offer beef hash for twenty cents and stuffed peppers for ten. No more free lunch since liquor has gone, which warranted that freedom. Nothing now but emptiness and dust. It seemed to me that this desertion of the old saloon, child of the taverns where the clipper captains used to meet to drink, I suppose mulled claret and canary wine, is as significant of *Finis Bostoniæ* as the installation of the most modern repetition plant. For here is a revolution in the mind, which matters more than a revolution in the workshop. The old saloon meant as much to Boston as the learned ones who paced the greensward at Cambridge; it was part of the same adventurous individual life, where a man took a single chance and, when he succeeded, took his pleasure. Now, Boston is socialized industrially, and a new impulse toward efficiency has turned away the flow of its people from the taverns where it used to royster. It is not age which has killed Boston, for no cities die of age; it is the youth of other cities, of young America, who would not let Old Boston live unless it transformed itself as it is doing. So the old saloon is closed. Or no, it is more significant than that. The Old Boston saloon has its door ajar. It is still open, but hardly so.



## II

### AMERICA IN THE MAKING

THERE is no peace in Chicago. In Chicago the past and the future give birth to an unruly being that angrily shakes the fetters of one tradition as it creates another which it throws away as it goes, like a snake which wearies of its skin and sloughs it off for a new one. It is a city of terror and light, untamed and unwearied. It has harnessed a white-hot energy to beginnings; upon its roofs it erects cities; it has torn the vitals of its streets for railway cuttings, set up porticoes as promises of colonnades. Grim is the heart within, and hot as molten metal. The city writhes in its narrow communications, as the head of Medusa among its tangled hair. Its suburbs lie like disjointed members, deprived of easy transit to the body: the suburban stores forbid it; they fear for their custom, and the politicians tumble and crawl, in graft, threat, and proclamation, over the great body that heaves, angry and chafed, yet negligent of what is not its daily labour, like a dray horse with bent head that shakes the tenacious flies. Here is room for lust and its repression, none for listlessness; here is everlasting



struggle, no mild aspiration to peace. There is no peace in Chicago. . . .

In the first chapter I recorded impressions of the Land of the Bean and the Cod, but now, with the Middle West before me, dazing me by the clash of its trolley cars, blinding me with the fire and cloud of its smokestacks, I hesitate. I hesitate partly because the Middle West is big, because it is real, and because, erected upon the pedestal of its worth, America attendant upon its triumph, it may not care to be analyzed at all. For it is a fable that the truly great tolerate criticism; nearly all detest it. Already I have earned trouble, hardly by criticizing America, but by alluding to her. In my yellow novel, *Caliban*, I make two allusions to America, and only two. In one case I mention a Miss Daisy Hogstein of Chicago. I say nothing about her. I merely mention her. And immediately a newspaper discusses the carping spirit in which the English, etc. In another place I say that my hero, Lord Bulmer, the ruthless newspaper proprietor, would have been happier in America than in England, a remark which applies to a good many men. Three newspapers violently deny that such a person would ever have been tolerated in a free republic which, etc. Again, in Boston, during the *Mayflower* celebration, I shyly pointed out that the early Virginians should also be remembered. A blast from Boston intimates that an Englishman, instead of talking of the things he doesn't understand, etc.

What am I to do? Am I to take the advice of a gentleman I met in Minnesota, who said to me, "When a foreigner comes over here, we want to hear the nice things." Well, anyone who reads these chapters will find as many nice things about America as is good for her self-conceit. Only, cases such as the three I quote make one a little nervous; one is afraid to generalize, and one must generalize when one is writing impressions of a country. I cannot do separate justice to Mr. Cristobal of El Paso, and Mr. Hiram Jebbison of Maine; I must find out *in general* the things that Mr. Cristobal and Mr. Jebbison have in common. I hope to do this in a later chapter, and now I want to generalize on the Middle West.

I have not spent a lifetime in America, but during my stay I have done nothing but study her. I have observed the country between Maine and California; Illinois and Oklahoma; Missouri, Tennessee, and Pennsylvania; I have visited libraries, manufacturing plants, and oil wells; I have talked to a number of people, literary, industrial, commercial, professional; to men, mothers, and girls; to *Mayflower* Americans, to galvanized Americans, to negroes, and to immigrants. And so I venture to lay down my narrow definition of the Middle West. For me the Middle West begins west of Pennsylvania. I feel that the real East never got very far away from the coast, that the West came to meet the people who sought it; it came fresh, free, untraditional, and thus very swiftly converted the old Englishmen of Colonial

days into Americans. In other words, to me the Middle West is the true America. The gay Orientalism of New York, the rigid dignities of Boston, the laughter and languors of the South—to me these things are not essentially American. The true America is in the Middle West, and Columbus discovered nothing at all except another Europe. It may be that the Far West will strike some observers as typically American because it is vital, ambitious, young; if they are so tempted, they should remember that the Far West is still to too great an extent a pioneer country, just as the East is to too great an extent a traditional country. The true American spirit appears as a blend of traditionalism and pioneering, and that is what we find in the Middle West.

In eight months, in Chicago, three thousand automobiles were stolen. Such a fact gives one an idea of the magnitude of the commercial activities of that city. I do not mean that automobile stealing has yet become a national industry, though it is going strong, but if automobiles can be stolen at the rate of forty-five hundred per annum, many scores of thousands must be making Chicago into the city of noise which it is. My first impression of Chicago was indeed noise. For nothing had I seen the traffic in Piccadilly Circus and on Boulevard Montmartre. I had still to realize the impact upon the human ear of two lines of trolley cars running over cobbles, on wheels that are never oiled; this, combined with several hundreds of motor vehicles with their throttles open; this combined

with a double line of elevated railways whose couplings are never oiled; and this combined with a policeman who acts as master of the revels by means of a whistle. What a whistle! A steam whistle? A steam policeman? In Chicago you never can tell. It was magnificent. I had a sense that here was something animal and untamed, something (as Carl Sandburg might put it) sanguinary and husky. Here no hint of leisure, nor of mercy, for mercy is a draft on time and life—in Chicago there is no time for life.

This immense crowd that burrowed among the raging traffic wanted to get somewhere; it wanted that with an intensity, with a singleness of object, which I did not discover in Fifth Avenue. As I stood dazed, while the orange-sided taxicabs flitted past me, I began to understand the Chicago that says, "I want," and at the same time says, "I will." The policeman with his whistle at once taught me something; in London the policeman puts up a languid hand and is obeyed; in New York he puts out a white-gloved hand, remarks, "Go back," and is often obeyed; in Chicago he needs a whistle as a word of command, to control a people who will not obey. Chicago is a city which must be dominated, as if it were a magnificent and savage animal that plunges and rears.

It is not for nothing that the predominating colour of Chicago is orange. It is as if the city, in its taxicabs, in its shop fronts, in the wrappings of its parcels, chose the colour of flame that goes with the smoky black of its factories. It is not for nothing that



it has repelled the geometric street arrangement of New York and substituted therefor great ways with names that a stranger must learn if he can. As a rule he fails. His brain does not work properly. He is in a crowd city, and if he has business there, he tells himself, "If I weaken I shan't last long."

The psychology of Chicago is deeply coloured with self-love. It harbours blinding pride, the pride of the man who can do things, and has no use for the man who can't. Almost every educated person in Chicago will call his city crude, perhaps even vulgar, but the end of the sentence exhibits love and pride. Pride is the essence of his feeling; the inhabitant of Chicago seems to find in his city an immense, unruly child, something that bellows, breaks windows, says unsuitable things . . . but grows, grows magnificently, secretly grows in dominating charm, in the charm of eternal adolescence, the charm of eternal desire.

This psychology is not that of all the Middle West. In St. Louis, for instance, another civilization has more sobriety. Here is a big city. Here is Lindell Avenue, with its detached stucco or brick residences, which embody the respectability of the 'sixties. Here is the new architecture of Westminster Place and Portland Place, which have the modesty, the solidity of a rich English suburb. Here is America respectable without ostentation, and here, too, lives the self-reliance of a city rich enough to afford splendour, to afford Forest Park and its open-air theatre, its seventy-five hundred seats, its stage decorated with real trees.

Here is tradition, about the feet of the new America rising in the heart of St. Louis; round the American centre cling hundreds of little English grocers, fruit dealers, and mercers. Here is little Old England drying up, while in the middle of St. Louis the ambitious office buildings rise up seeking the new horizon.

St. Louis lost something of its old direction when its breweries lost their occupation. This applies also to Cincinnati, where again I had the impression of sobriety and comfort. To see the children of St. Louis in their playground is to understand another side of the Middle West, its material comfort. There were two hundred of them, pupils of a free school, and all were clean; not one wore dirty or torn clothes. There is not a single city in England where you could visit a free school with such a result. It is not that the English are more careless of their children than other people: it is that they do not possess the material wealth which makes the Middle West so splendid an exhibition. No more than Europe has America made full use of her opportunities; the haste of production produces commercial crises, overstocking, and therefore poverty; tenements are vile and nurture immorality. But America has wealth in hand, which Europe has not; only work is wanted.

Possibly the Americans work harder, though I have never found that hard work naturally led to high rewards. They do work enormously hard. For instance, in Tulsa, Oklahoma, the trolley cars which make for the business district are almost empty at



8.30 A.M. By that time nearly everybody is at work. And, at Chicago, I was interested by a big business building opposite my hotel, when I noticed that at nine o'clock in the evening many of the offices were still tenanted. I began to watch that building. At nine o'clock work was going on in thirty-eight offices; at 10.15 P.M. there was energy still in ten; at 11.35 P.M. three offices were preparing to break into the next day. I don't know what happened next, for I went to bed; I am not from Chicago.

In Chicago work is dramatic; its spirit is impressive; I cannot ignore a picture postcard I bought there; it bears merely these words, "Experience is a dead loss if you can't sell it for more than it cost you." A variation of an immortal truth . . . which may shock some gentle soul. Well, it doesn't shock me. I like the extremism of it, just as I like the massive place where this sentiment circulates. I like Chicago, I like the colossal lines of its point of view, its religion of utility, its gospel of fitness, just as I like its streets, its attempt on South Michigan Boulevard to force even the lakeside into straight lines. You will find this heavy power in a store like Marshall Field's, a commercial city within a commercial city, a place so vast that one would welcome as a guide through its labyrinth a thread woven by Arachne. This mystic thread of the mythological spider—does Marshall Field stock it? Probably.

You have the same feeling in Washington Park, in the vast space which suggests that America always has

plenty of land, even enough for its pleasure grounds. To an outsider Chicago seems too big for mankind, but mankind in Chicago does not appear worried by that fact. Indeed, it enjoys size; it likes the enormous whiteness of the monument to Time, in Washington Park; it finds its great university worthy of itself; it is typical of Chicago's faith in its own future that, in one part of that university, it called a certain space a quadrangle when only two sides of it were built.

The Middle West can afford to trust a future of which the present is merely the vestibule. I like to think of the time to come when the ledges between the Lakes have been dredged out and when the fleets of the world will come sailing up the St. Lawrence, through the Lakes, and moor opposite the Congress Hotel, there to unload the spices of India and the caviare of the Black Sea. Mass and space; that, to me, defines the Middle West. Consider the Continental and Commercial Security Company's Building. It is a bank in Chicago, and conducts its activities in a hall that looks like a railway station. The building exhibits all the splendid dryness of line of American architecture; its pillars rise up contemptuous to an obscure heaven. Indeed, the Continental and Commercial Security Company is housed in a work of art made more estimable by being also a work of perfect utility. Or again, go farther south, to little Tulsa, which twenty years ago did not exist, and look at the great Cosden Building. England has been in business for a thousand years and did not think of a building higher

than nine floors; Tulsa needed it before it was twenty years old. There is no precedent for this.

But these altitudes are by the way, though they are to a certain extent indications of spirit. It is in the manufacturing plants of America that human vigour expresses itself best. I have seen a number of them, dealing in steel, flour, timber, but in a way Armour's is most remarkable. Armour's is remarkable not so much because it has divided the operations of labour as far as human ingenuity can go, but because of the material on which it works. To watch an animal from the pen to the tin is an extraordinary experience. You see it killed; it falls; a conveyor carries it away. It is flayed while you wait. It disappears. Then, suddenly, it is an open carcass; it passes the veterinary; in a few seconds it is cut up, and hurriedly you follow the dwindling carcass, that is no longer an ox, but fragments of meat; you see the meat shredded; in another room the manicured girls are filling the shreds into tins, and the tin is closed and labelled. The thing that astounds is the quiet officialdom of this murder. It is as if nothing had happened. Death is so swift, the evidence of tragedy so soon gone, that one feels no shock that flesh loses its character. Cattle are being handled like brass, so swiftly that life becomes merely a raw material. That is Chicago. A superior force, which is called organized industry, has cut up the cattle on a travelling belt and carried them away. For a moment I have a vision of Chicago carried away on its own travelling belt. Carried away . . . where to?

I did not have so strong an impression of the steel-rolling mills, no doubt because I know something about metals and know nothing about cattle. Rolling mills are familiar with their clank, their dust, and all that. It was at Minneapolis, at the Washburn-Crosby Mills, that I rediscovered the magnificence of the Middle West. Here again is the immense swiftness of modern industry, not bloody this time, but dainty. The flour mills are like drawing-rooms, lightly powdered as befits. For the first time in my life I saw a factory with parquet floors. There is a fascination in these things, the fascination of uniform movement. You watch the grain from the elevator on to the belt, then to the grinder, to the shaking sieves, to the tests which exhibit purity, to the hoppers which humanly discharge just as much as the sack will hold. The sack falls into a truck and it is gone. There is something lovely in these great works; they are deserts, void of men. Nothing is handled that can possibly be seized by fingers of steel. There are solitude and activity; there is nothing there save iron and lumber, in the midst of which sits some secret, invisible soul. Somehow I feel that in these great plants I see before me the future of the world, a world where the machine will be a servant shepherded by new men and women, in raiment which they no longer need to soil, and who will with polished finger-nails touch buttons that convey intelligent messages.

The great plants of the Middle West seem to me to sublimate human intelligence and to promise a time



when mankind will be free from sweat; the curse of Adam may yet be lifted by Chicago. In so doing the Middle West is doing something else; it is creating beauty. I say this, realizing the contempt that may fall upon this opinion from academic quarters. There is beauty elsewhere than in lace; there is a rugged beauty, and there is a beauty of supreme utility. These great factories are worthy exponents of the forgotten William Morris; there everything is useful, and it is not excessive to say that everything is beautiful because everything is strong. Naturally the strong are not also the subtle; with strength goes a certain crudity of expression and of thought. I do not refuse to see the almost comic contrast between a great plant and the mottoes in its showroom. Here are two: "Never put off till to-morrow what you can do to-day." There is something a little obvious in that, and mischievous Europeanism induces me to retort, "Never do to-day what you can do to-morrow; you may never have to do it at all." Again, there is vulgarity in this other motto: "Be like a postage stamp. Stick till you get there." But Talleyrand was right in saying that you cannot make omelets without breaking eggs. The Middle West cannot be expected to prepare the omelet of the future without making a mess of the eggs of the skylark and the dove. But it can be trusted with those of the American eagle.

The Middle West, I repeat it, is doing beautiful things. It has even produced a great work of art—the grain elevator. Stop for a moment outside the

mills of Pillsbury, or Washburn-Crosby, in Minneapolis, and consider the lofty towers of these elevators, their rounded magnificence, marred by no fanciful nonsense such as pediments or porticoes or garlands, or suchlike Renaissance futility; consider the purity of the lines rising sheer; the elevator is like a turreted castle, spectral white, and as free from excrescences as the phrase of a great prose writer from useless words. The towers cluster under their cubic tops, dignified and serene. I have seen the cathedrals of America, and her grain elevators. I have seen nothing nobler than these factories of the moon.

A material component in the psychology of the Middle West is the haste and intensity with which its natural wealth is being developed. One obtains a clear idea of this wealth through a short visit to one of the great state fairs, such as the one which I encountered in Minnesota. These fairs fortify the impression derived from the endless wheat and corn fields between Minnesota and Kansas; fields without end: that sums up the impression. When one talks to the farmers, slow, cautious, not unamiable, though faintly suspicious, one understands the speculation in real estate which has swept over the Middle West; one hears extraordinary stories of farms of five or six hundred acres, which are now worth one hundred dollars an acre; of market gardens sold for a thousand dollars an acre; one is told that a generation ago this was wild land for which somebody gladly took fifteen dollars. One hears stories of sudden wealth; one visits a farmstead and



discoverers with a certain sense of the inappropriate that not only has the farmer an automobile, but each of his sons has one too; there is a grand piano—but also a gramophone. It feels sudden, improvised, and all the more so when one finds out how careless is the farming. Most of the land is being sweated, the crops taken, and nothing put back by an adventurous agriculturist who intends to push on farther west when he has looted the land. I encountered no crops comparing with the European; most of the yields, particularly of wheat, are about one third to one half of a French crop. And the land is better! I am not crying out, “Waste!” for I do not know all the factors; what interests me is the reaction on American psychology. This bountifulness, this excess, all that is evidence of the immense potentiality of the land. Men farm best where the land is cruel, as in Scotland; in the Middle West the land is beneficent, and so it is no wonder that a trait of Middle-West psychology should be good-tempered hospitality and generosities that surprise the European; the Middle West can afford virtues.

It was an unforgettable impression, an impression of a Land of Cockayne, that I obtained at the Minnesota State Fair. The corncobs were so large, so smooth; they showed fruit fit for photography in Christmas supplements; tomatoes which threatened the pumpkin; dark grapes; fish and game—and, what counts also, by the side of the leather, the oil, the horses, and the tools, the indications of pioneer culture, the posters by the school children, the still queerer emotional life,

represented by the societies of the Irish and the veterans. There was a lot of everything—the word “shortage” is not American. No class has quite so much as it wants, but it always has more than the corresponding European class. That is why you can visit in America a city of a hundred thousand inhabitants and find there better shops, better goods, more artistic stuffs, more attractive furniture, and, in unexpected spots, a more vivid culture than in any English town—wealth leads to aristocracy; out of wealth America will breed hers. The poor aristocrat is a popular illusion. Indeed, an aristocrat may be poor, but he must be the son or the grandson of an aristocrat who was rich. Without wealth aristocracy cannot survive; without wealth it cannot be born. Wealth does not necessarily create aristocracy, but it can do so. I feel that the aristocracy of America will not be maintained out of the elegancies of Boston or the languors of South Carolina, but is being born, born of the rugged, fierce stock of the Middle West. After all, the early aristocrats, the Normans and the Crusaders, too, were kid-gloved neither in their morals nor in their manners.

The reader will realize from the foregoing that I have not joined the faintly envious clamour against the Middle West. The Middle West, by the fact of its novelty, shows its “seamy side”; the dust of ages, which has filled the seams of Paris and London town, has not had time to make for the West a glossy surface. And so the East, with three hundred years behind it,

is more acutely conscious of Chicago than the foreigner can be. Certainly, from the Eastern point of view, Chicago is what you might call difficult. I can understand that a banking family in Manhattan, harking back to bankers of New Amsterdam, dislikes the unashamed boosting which Chicago indulges in. Do not attack me because I say "boosting"; it is Chicago's own word. At the top of every page of one of Chicago's newspapers you will find every day a different legend. Here are two, which I extract, collected during my stay in Chicago: "Why Chicago is great: Chicago has more than twenty thousand manufacturing plants." Here is another: "Be a Chicago booster to your friends in other cities." Well, yes, it is a little difficult; it crows over the fallen; there is nothing delicate about it. But Chicago never was delicate; no more was any man at arms. Chicago is the man at arms of modern industry; that has to be remembered when you criticize it at work or at leisure. It has a passion for fact; a passion for realities malleable as cement before they are applied to industry, hard as cement in the end. Chicago is prouder than Boston, because it is surer of itself. It has built its castle upon the future—for Chicago a secure foundation. That is why there is no peace in Chicago, and why, if ever Chicago attains peace, it will be the nefarious peace of a termination.

Indeed, the whole Middle West is Chicagoan; it is conscious of itself, more conscious than any other part of America. Its local feeling is intense. That baffles one sometimes, when one discovers that the man

who is talking to you is not talking about America, but about his own state. I had two evidences of it, in each case owing to something having been said against the people or the manners of a certain state; in each case denizens of the state protested violently, but when it came to attacking America they did not mind much. The state meant to them something more intimate, something more precious than America itself.

That characteristic has been observed and laughed at; it has earned for America a provincial reputation, which seems to me absurd, when we consider that the American spirit arises from an intellectual congress of all the world spirits. America is not provincial; America is regional. That is natural when one considers that its size is so great that only a minority of Americans can afford a journey longer than twenty-four hours, and that this long journey—long enough to traverse the whole of Great Britain—will not take a man beyond the borders of the next Middle-Western state. It is natural that the American should be insular, for every state is an island cut off by distance. There is another reason, which is less obvious, and that is the political arrangement of America. The travelling Englishman tends to look upon cities such as Minneapolis or St. Louis as provincial cities, provincial in the English sense of Manchester or Birmingham. He is wrong. He forgets that some of the big cities are capitals of an almost sovereign state; in many cases cities no larger than Jefferson, Nashville, Albany, have their Capitols. That makes a difference. Glasgow,



with its eight hundred thousand inhabitants, is nothing but a provincial city. It sends a few members to the British Parliament, and, for the rest, it is nothing. It has a City Council, holds powers over traffic and sanitation, etc., but no more. Compare that with a small American capital, which has its own parliament, which makes its own absolute laws on civil relations, marriage, inheritance, etc. Consider the effect upon local life, notably the creation of a governing class in the state, an official class, a natural centre for education and culture. From that point of view the difference is enormous; Lancashire is merely a province, but Rhode Island is almost a sovereign state. Therefore, a man from Rhode Island is a subject of Rhode Island as much as a subject of America, whereas a man from Lancashire is a British subject, carrying a vague geographical label.

To me this is a good thing. I believe that there are in the world only two advanced constitutions: one is the Swiss; the other the American. How these constitutions work out is another question, but, taken by themselves, they are advanced, because they provide a maximum of home rule for people living under different climates, therefore people of different mentality, and especially provide almost complete freedom for people of different races. It almost looks as if Alexander Hamilton and his friends had foreseen that their country would become the melting pot of the world.

If it were not for state liberty, I imagine that America would have experienced much greater



difficulties during the war, when it had to deal with hostile German-Americans and with almost sluggish Scandinavian and Czecho-Slovak Americans. If all power had been concentrated at Washington, I wonder if the problem could have been handled at all. As it was, with executive powers that were accustomed to rule the people located in every state, the problem was minimized by being divided. If I were an American, I should be one of those who jealously resist any extension of power to the Federal authorities; I should stand for my state first, because I should believe that the people of my own state were closer to me in temperament than citizens of the same country living three thousand miles away.

The state system seems to be manifestly ideal, as I observe the German-Americans. Let my readers overlook the hyphen. It is no use pretending that all are 100-per-cent Americans. Some are, and some are not. What matters is that the percentage, if it is less than 100 per cent, should be a good, healthy percentage likely to grow as the generations pile up.

I encountered a good many German-Americans in Milwaukee, Winconsin, and farther south. They were not crushed or uncomfortable; several of them spoke German among themselves, but in most cases I felt that they were Americans first, and German only in their memory. One of them, who arrived in America at the age of sixteen, and who had married an American-born wife, expressed to me his deliberate intention of "becoming" a 100-per-cent American; another, who

had arrived at the age of eight, was almost completely Americanized—remembered only a few German words that his mother had spoken. A third, who immigrated at a later age, was a little sad; he could not help feeling the disaster which had come upon his country, and put his situation simply: “What’s the use of thinking of the things that happened in the past? The only thing is to settle down in this country, which is good to us, and do the best we can for ourselves.” Then, with a flash of insight, “To do the best for ourselves in America, it seems to me that’s the best thing we can do for America itself.” In other words, the American magnet seems to draw the national traits out without shaming them. For instance, in St. Paul, a large board in a building plot announces that an edifice will shortly become “the future home of the German-American industries.” In the same town there is still a *Volks Zeitung*. In other words, the German-American is holding his head up, which means that nobody is beating it down. That seems to be the right way.

It is part of the vitality of the Middle West that it should put as much energy into its pleasures as it does into its work. That is perhaps American, rather than Middle-Western, for, in general, the American seems to work sixteen hours a day. He may call one occupation hustling freight, another one eating, another golf, but it is all work. And whether this is a vice or a virtue may be discussed later on. But in the Middle West there is a curious intensity of organization.

Almost every town has an official book, indicating pleasures. I have a collection of them, such as, *Now in St. Louis*, *The Visitor's Handy Guide to Minneapolis*, *Seeing Chicago*, *What Is Doing in Cincinnati*, *In Kansas City This Week*, etc. You will never find that in Europe, except at the seaside. In minor European towns the favourite diversion is sleep; I believe the average American would prefer nightmare. He is always doing, always planning; he follows Mr. Arnold Bennett and learns to live on twenty-four hours a day. When he takes his pleasure in a cultural form he is sometimes rather grave; in fact, there is a certain gravity in all American pleasures, though noisy, because they are taken intensely and thoroughly. If the American acted otherwise he would feel that he was wasting the good raw material of life. So the American pleasure crowds are more vivid than those of Europe; they are not so light, they are perhaps not so spontaneous, but anybody who has sat at the movies, or watched "Babe" Ruth excite his crowd, realizes the depth of feeling that the American puts into moments ferociously snatched from his daily work.

Naturally, in the Middle West with this goes what the East calls crudity. The West is plain-spoken, and does not waste anything of its appeal. It realizes that pleasure is one of the national products, just as it tells one that the film industry is the fourth in order of importance. So it puts things briefly. It advertises on a boarding that to-night there will be a "vodvil," which is a way of expressing eagerness and economy of

effort foreign to the more languid tradition of "vaudeville." I had the same impression in St. Paul, where, outside a restaurant, stands merely in enormous letters the word, "Eat." It is unvarnished; it says to you: "Do you want a good time? Come inside," instead of saying, more or less, "Within will be found diversions for the families of gentlefolk." I saw the Middle West at play in Barnum's circus as it went through Kansas City. Kansas City was perhaps not the best place to see intensity, for to me it is a Southern town. It is a joyful, delightful town, with its patchwork of black and white faces, its bright colours, its lovely sunshine, and its sense of prosperity.

I found out that the circus was coming because the streets filled up. The sidewalks were lined with rows of coloured women and solemn piccaninnies. A little farther were the white, who pretended not to be interested, but stood about all the same, talking hard and forbearing from going to their business. Just behind me a shine shop, conducted by seven negroes, added the sounds of a gramophone to their labours; from time to time, at the proper moment of syncopation, the shiners all together brought down their brushes upon a board! It felt very "South," but it was Middle West all the same. There was no mistake about that when you reached the main street. Kansas City, that day, was in the hands of its circus. It stayed in its hands all the week, though one would have thought that the vast tent, which seats seven or eight thousand people round the eight standards laden with electric lights,

could have taken in, in one night, the idlers of the town. The point is that the circus did not appeal to the idlers, but to the whole of Kansas City, to the whole population, determined to take all the pleasure it could. I never saw a more responsive audience, piled forty feet high. In the amphitheatre of the tent there was a constant swirl of excitement, a craning to the right and left, as if to miss nothing of what was going on in the three rings. Barnum's could not be anything but American; it is too large. Europe has never seen twenty clowns together, or three motor-car loads of comics on any stage; nor would we think of showing together dancing elephants, jujitsu, and a tree-chopping competition. The effect bewilders—the excessive lighting, the excessive variety. It is a savage entertainment, a shower of pleasures before some barbarian conqueror.

In the grounds they sold bright balloons, pink or electric blue. As we came back upon the trolley car it was almost full of coloured people. A young negress in strawberry pink was laughing as she enticed aloft one of those light balloons. She had fine Parisian features, twinkling black eyes. As the balloon descended too suddenly upon a sharp finger nail, it burst, and she vanished, weeping, among the consolations of two enormous mammies, one in yellow satin with a blue sunbonnet.

I do not quite know what I mean, but I feel that the pleasure of the circus expresses something important in the Middle West. The circus is most successful from



Ohio westward, and south of the Mason and Dixon line. It makes an elementary contrast with the more sophisticated rhythms of Broadway. It expresses difficulty, natural strength, skill, and it gives through acrobats its thrills of terror. The Minnesota State Fair, for instance, offered as a sensation a crash between two locomotives launched upon a track; another was an aëronautical feat—the passage of the aviator from one plane to the other, both being in motion. It means something, all that; it conveys something fierce in Middle-Western psychology, something rooted deep in the spirit of the pioneer. The man who has taken risks values other men only if they take risks. He likes danger for its own sake, though he is afraid, like other men, when he meets it. It stimulates him physically; he is not content with the languid songs and the rosy lights of the more ancient civilizations.

It is an apparent paradox that the effort of the Middle West should be as cultural as it is sensational. I feel that in Middle-Western psychology you will find almost equal interest in, let us say, a fight between a lion and a bull, and the latest play by Mr. Bernard Shaw. That is not such a paradox as it seems. If we find, as I did in St. Paul, a bookshop where three complete shelves are devoted to the works of Mr. Joseph Conrad, in Chicago, an appreciation of good literature that has developed bookshops such as one can hardly find abroad; if you find universities rising upon the prairie and within two or three years collecting five

thousand students, who arrive there straight with the straw in their hair; if you find in young cities like Minneapolis a splendid university; in little Tulsa, that is not twenty years old, a high school made of white stone—it merely means that here again are the characteristics of Middle-Western desire.

The Middle West wants things, everything, everything that man can get, whether it is gold, or love, or knowledge; it wants even æstheticism. In the office of an editor, a little while ago, I met a woman whom I will call a missionary of the Middle West. She was one of those elderly women, full of fire and conviction, whose emotions have flowed into a single channel. With a volubility that sometimes was bitter and sometimes inflamed, she was going the round of all the newspapers in America to induce them to give space every day to facts about pictures and sculpture. She was being rather cynically received that day by a very charming editor, who had been in journalism for a long time and kept few illusions. His indifference excited her; the glow in her eyes grew as she explained that the women of the Middle West were aching for contact with pictures. She was told that not one out of ten thousand educated people cared for pictures. She replied that the love of pictures came from the emotions, and that education was not the ground where emotions flourished. When laughed at, she replied, with immovable faith, that we did not know her women, that we had not seen them, after a long day's work, go to a loan

exhibition. She even told us that one of the old ladies came to her with tears in her eyes, after looking at a Turner; the moral strain, which is so strong in Americans, made her suggest that to push forward pictures was the Right thing to do. She was wholly vital and full of faith. Now faith to a European is always a little funny. We cannot help it, yet I was moved by the hopefulness, the sincerity of all this, believing, as I do, that it does not matter much what one puts faith in, if one manages to have any faith at all. It seemed to me so indicative of the Middle West. I realize that much of the admiration which pictures obtain is mechanical; that it arises from a dull desire to improve one's mind, which is an awful idea. But still it is desire, it is hope, it is an aspiration to make an atmosphere where taste will have its chance, a chance which it may not secure in a more cynical and faded land.

The Middle West respects the arts. In Europe the arts are the scullions of the idle and the rich. In the Middle West they seem to be ignored by a great many busy people, but they do somehow earn their respect. There are large circles which specialize in the arts, whose appreciation sometimes takes unexpected forms. For instance, at a large tea party in Chicago, some fragments from a novel of mine were read aloud. It was very embarrassing. It was something that could never have happened in Europe. Europeans would have felt as self-conscious about it as I. But when I recovered from my embarrassment I understood that

here was honest appreciation ; here was a real liking for the words that were being read. It is this genuineness that in the Middle West appeals to one all the time. In places culture attains singularity. There is in Chicago a curious, decadent little club, with orange couches, grey-green walls, and orange curtains decorated with black lace ; the yellow walls are flowered in black. Here are crystal and dancing and an aspiration to Paris or Vienna. That is a new Middle West, no longer the Middle West of the lecture club, but a Middle West which has digested its conquests and is developing into sophistication

On the whole, though, the Middle West remains itself, almost untouched. You will find its solidity in its bookshops, where appear Mr. Chesterton, Miss Clemence Dane, Mr. Galsworthy, Mr. Conrad, Mr. Beresford, etc., and many works on democratic and sociological questions. Almost everywhere, too, " liberal " bookshops, which seem to specialize in radical pamphlets and in Russian literature. Nothing of that can be ignored. It is all part of the great rush of desire which is the central fact of the Middle West. It is the desire of the pioneer who has just made his money. Not many years ago he used to come up to the cities for a magnificent spree in the saloons. Now his wife has taught him other lessons and he is coming up to the cities to have a great spree on modern civilization.

I suspect that the only way in which one can obtain a truthful picture of Middle-Western psychology is by

realizing that the Middle West is still a pioneer country. In a sense, most of America is still pioneering. It has only touched the edge of its natural resources; the individual chances are still immense, and that is perhaps why socialism has made in America less progress than it has in Europe. I have been told that in America a man of forty has either made his way or will never make it at all. I do not mean by this that at forty he must be a millionaire, but at forty he must have achieved his position as director of a corporation, maker of chairs, or artisan, according to his capacities. At forty he has either failed or succeeded; as he grows older he will not find himself more respected, as he would in Europe. Therefore, he knows that the individual struggle is hot; he struggles, and has little time for socialistic ideas. Moreover, he is born to a birthright that no western European enjoys. An English boy of seventeen knows pretty well what the future can give him. If he is born in the gentleman class and has money, he knows that he can be Prime Minister; if in the gentleman class but without money, he knows that he can hope to make two to four thousand pounds a year in one of the professions, and perhaps in business; but if he is a poor boy who has gone to the national school he knows perfectly well that, barring extraordinary accidents, he will always be a small man, an employed man, a minor shopkeeper, etc. That is not the situation in America. Every boy knows that nothing need stop him, that no class bar will cut him off from any



position or any office. In politics, notably, he knows that he has not to fear the rivalry of the old American families, because they stand aloof from politics; lastly, he knows that in the West of his country lies land which has seldom been trodden by a white foot. Therefore, there are resources which he can take, and, being a normal human being, he tries to secure his share. In other words, he is born a pioneer. I do not want to exaggerate; many millions of Americans are perfectly content to go on indefinitely in the occupation they have drifted into, and seek only more wages or more salary, but the thing that matters is the consciousness in the American mind that everything is open and everything is possible.

The Americans are called an ambitious race; that is not wonderful, for their country contains food for ambition. You have this feeling if you visit a real pioneer town. Such a thing cannot be found at all in Europe, while in America it is still fairly common. I experienced that feeling when I spent several days in Tulsa, Oklahoma, a town of seventy-two thousand inhabitants, and which twenty years ago did not exist at all. It has arisen on the oil fields; the district is still so deeply in the pioneer stage that four years ago, a few miles away, at a place called Slick, there was a big saloon where the cash desk was permanently guarded by a man with a loaded rifle. Now, what is interesting in Tulsa is the remnant of the pioneering spirit as it recedes before the bank and the trolley

car. Both spirits still dwell there. Already long business streets and tall office buildings have arisen everywhere. But they cannot rise fast enough; that is the essence of Tulsa. For instance, the president of the Exchange National Bank, which is located in a building of fifteen floors, told me that they had reserved for the bank a certain space; the bank outgrew the space in six months. But a hundred yards away from the big bank, the modern hotel with its luxurious lounge and its French restaurant, next door to the railway station, lies a green field, where at night the locusts sing in thousands. Civilization jostles the wild! It jostles it in the most extraordinary way. For in this young city there is an active social life, much dining and dancing; smart little cafés, dancing clubs, and musical societies have formed; the newspapers already have their traditions; at night the electric light blazes in the city, to the amazement of the Osage Indians, who sit in their blankets upon the hills that overlook the town.

Tulsa has just happened. A visit to Owens Park, for instance, is a revelation of speed; it is so new, its trees are so young, that at ten o'clock in the morning it is impossible to find in it a satisfactory square yard of shade. Here is the country of the new men, the oil men. I have watched them for a long time, nearly all of them rather dry, tall Yankees, or of the new American type, dark and rather heavy. All look hard; all live on oil; I have a vague feeling that in Oklahoma the limitations of morals and of law are the

limitations set by the police, and occasionally by lynch law. Here is the new edition of Brandy Gulch. The men outnumber the women, some of whom belong to a rather hectic type. But already the mothers and the young ladies range the town; civilization is swift upon the pioneers' trail.

Tulsa is still a mining camp; it expresses itself in violent films, just as a few years ago it expressed itself in its saloons. It still has a vast population housed in shacks, but a population that presses a button when it wants a glass of water or a team of elephants. All rests on oil, and I had the good fortune to be present at a well when oil was struck, when the mother sand came up, black, and smelling of the precious fluid. They are unimpressive, these oil derricks; the oil plant seems knocked together, improvised out of waste lumber and old pipes. The sense of pioneering is enhanced by so much being made out of so little, made also with little apparent excitement. The truth is that there is not very much excitement in pioneering. It is the normal job of the Middle-Westerner; adventure is his business; none see romance in the long, long trail when they come to set their foot upon it. It is part of the Middle Western psychology that in the *Tulsa World* I should have found two columns of situations vacant and only half a column of people wanting situations. In spite of the Chicago slums, there is enough for everybody; that is the chief lesson of the Middle West. There is enough for every ambition, whether material or cultural; what the

Middle West makes of its chances will inevitably, in virtue of its size, in virtue of its dominating novelty, be a simple thing; the civilization that the Middle West creates within the next fifty years will be the American civilization.

### III

#### THE AMERICAN SCENE

IT is not superfluous to repeat, before preparing an outline of the American character, that a lifetime would not be too much for such a task, covering so many regions, such various races, temperaments with three centuries of tradition, and new Americans whose fathers were Poles. So what I wish to say is in the nature of impression rather than conclusion, and I am prepared to be corrected by my own experience. But I do feel entitled to call the United States "God's own country." It is true that (according to the American Bankers' Association) 30 per cent of Americans aged fifty-five depend on their children or charity; that at the age of sixty-five no less than 54 per cent are thus unfortunate; it is true that the ravages of tuberculosis, the enormous divorce rate, compare with the schedule of European miseries. Still, here is a favoured land which, owing to its area and to its wealth, can give a chance to every young man, and, if it chooses, even to every young woman. All benefits have been poured out upon America and America is



using them as a cheerful prodigal; America is conscious of her good fortune, and that is why she can afford the manifestation of pride which is called democracy. Democracy is the most arrogant of all forms; it is the converse of snobbery, for the snob conceives only superiors and inferiors. The snob is a man who thinks he has no equals, while the democrat is the man who thinks he has only equals. He is often mistaken in his view.

And so a European thinks it picturesque and delightful to go to a bathing hut on a lake, ask for his bathing things, and hear a youth call out to his boss, "Say, where's *this man's* bathing suit?" To have a coloured chambermaid stop him on the stairs and bluntly ask, "Where's your wife?" It is amusing, after the bent backs of the English servant class, though I should add that these backs are bending less and less now. It is pleasing because, like most things American, the democratic notion is cut out in sharp lines and painted in bright colours. The American fantasia, it I may so call it, is scarlet and gold. The scarlet of American excess creeps even into the pale blue of American sentimentality. Let not the reader conclude that I claim for England freedom from sentimentality; we, too, suffer greatly from what is mainly emotion gone mouldy. But England feels a little ashamed of her sentimentality, while America tends to account it as righteousness. Of the sentimental attitude toward women, noblest and purest, I will say something of a little farther on. It sometimes takes a

strange lyrical form, particularly in the newspapers. And the newspapers matter, for the newspaper exhibition of the national character is the national character seen under a magnifying glass. The newspaper character is the national character—more so. For instance, I read in a newspaper that a certain lady has extraordinary courage, a keen sense of intuition, and a sublime faith in God. A very sagacious diagnosis inside a single interview.

But sentimentality, which so naturally envelops the young bride, the good mother, the little child, takes in America some forms that interest me more. One of them is the sweet and simple life of millionaires. I am continually reading descriptions showing that the financial superman does not live on caviare off diamond-studded plates; that his subtle mind subsists upon the rudest fare and the highest thought; that he likes to set aside the nurture of his millions for a peaceful hour with Artemus Ward; that his true pleasure is serving in the local *crêche*, teaching the creed that is called, "How to get on and yet be good." I like to think of the millionaire talking freely in the street to some one who owns rather less, and with a green watering-can assisting into beauty a little bed of marigolds.

I think that impulse, which is purely American, arises from a desire to humanize the apparently inhuman. American business, shrewd as it is, seems to have a heart; it wants to do for individual men the fair and the generous thing. The whole trend of

American civilization is toward stressing the human factor; indeed, the word "human" (in the sense of "friendly") is used in no other part of the English-speaking countries. Also, a certain reverence attaches to power; reverence is always apparent in the American character, curiously combined with irreverence. For instance, the magazine and novel continually present allusions to "the great surgeon" and "the great lawyer." The cynical European suspects that the great surgeon is a scrubby reactionary who does not read the medical journals; he views the great lawyer either as a foxy fee snatcher or as a toothless dodderer on the bench. But the American seems to invest these people with mental robes of ermine and scarlet. He is more easily impressed; his vision is more direct and less often leads him to doubt; where a European would doubt, an American often hates.

You find this seriousness extending even to the most ignoble of occupations, the arts. In civilized countries the arts are, as a rule, merely the resounding kettles tied to the tails of the hounds that are hunting the great quarry of profit. But in an American newspaper you will see headlines such as this, "Playwright Finds His Inspiration in Lonely Sand Dunes." No European would be interested in the playwright's inspiration, except as an object for jeers. The American takes the arts seriously, just as he takes seriously the funds for the restoration of churches. He is altogether more literal; he uses the words "right" and "wrong," as to the meaning of which

many Europeans have become rather shaky. He takes his tradition more seriously. For instance, in Chicago I observed a headline in the newspaper, "Cotton Exchange Fifty Years Old To-day." That has an irresistible charm. One need not, from the false vantage of the Oxford turf, smile at a record of fifty years; one envies, rather, the contentment so aroused. Then, once more, American complexity appears—I contrast this headline with the fact that in nearly every American city I have visited hotels and office buildings, erected round about 1900, are being pulled down to give place to buildings that shall be up-to-date. America delights in tradition, and destroys it as she goes. She hates the thing she respects, burns the god that she worships. Once more, here is a sign of the immense vitality of the land; you discover it best in the headlines of the newspapers. Here are a few which I collected:

"Ruth Up—Oh, Babe! She's a Ball Player."

"Yo-ho! Postman Hooks a Man Eater."

"Sisler is Out Front to Stick."

"Spoonng Parlour at Union Church."

"Bathers Stone Pastor Who Flayed Scanty Costumes."

"Her Corking Face Lands Girl in Jail."

You may laugh. You may protest that this is not America, that it is a libel on America; but the thing must be at least part of America if you sell a million a day of it. Moreover, it is not discreditable. You may not like the following theatrical poster:

GIGANTIC  
GATHERING OF  
GLORIOUS  
GIRLS IN  
GORGEOUS  
GOWNS.

You may not like it any more than you like being told, a few weeks before the football season, that "the old pigskin is getting ready to peep over the horizon"; but all that, crude as it may sound, is vital, and in the end all vital things make for the vague and unstable condition which some dare to call "good." It may be difficult to reconcile it with culture, until it is understood that culture arises not only from decadence; that all poets are not emaciated; that many, from Whitman to William Morris, have grown lyrical on women and on wine.

Lyricism takes all forms. In the United States, one of the strangest from the European point of view is the adulation of business. As if America were reacting against the traditional adoration by England of the professions, she seems to set a peculiar value upon making, buying, and selling things. *The Dignity of Business* was written by an American, *The Romance of Commerce* was invented by another. To an extent this is a defence as well as an evangel, but it is certain that America has enshrined within business a portion of her romantic impulses. She respects the business man; while ready to give his due to the professional man, and more than his due to the artist, she intimately feels that business is the finest, as well as the most



valuable, function of man; she perceives in the business man the qualities of a hero; in her view, he is doing the best that can be done by man. An evidence of this is the prevalence in the magazines, not only of business short stories (almost invariably concerned with smart selling), but of actual articles on business. In the *Saturday Evening Post* I found an article on the rôle of the purchasing agent; in a single issue of the *American Magazine* I found two business stories, and seven articles on business or interviews of big business men, total well over a third of the contributions. And these are not commercial journals, but popular magazines. It seems to me that in this America performs a service; she is dragging down the wooden old traditions of cultured leisure and setting up instead an ideal which some may dislike, but which is a new ideal for new times.

One of the first things that impressed me in America is expressed in a large board that stands on every road outside West Chester, Pennsylvania. On one side of the board we read as follows:

THIS IS  
WEST CHESTER.  
COME RIGHT IN.  
GLAD TO SEE YOU.

And on the other side:

GOOD-BYE.  
COME AGAIN.  
COME OFTEN.  
WEST CHESTER.

This board enraged my American companion, who

happened to be an American artist of the highest order. He mouthed a furious denunciation of this "fraudulent cordiality." At last I told him that he knew nothing about it, being merely an American, and that I could assure him that this sort of thing did mean something. It might not mean exactly what it said, for few human expressions do, but it did mean something. It represents a dominant streak in the American character. It means what I have everywhere experienced—that America is really hospitable, really sociable. Can anyone imagine an English village telling you to "Come right in"? An English village is not communicative enough even to tell you to get out, which at bottom is its only emotion. In America the stranger is not welcomed in a purely mercantile spirit. The American wants trade, but he also wants to know things, to secure new impressions, and, if you will let him, he wants to like you. This combines with the old pioneer spirit into true hospitality. It may be thought that I am stressing the pioneer spirit, which seems to elucidate the Middle West, but I do believe that America still carries the pioneer habit of giving hospitality to all. I am not deceived by the reasons for this; the pioneer had not a warmer heart than anybody else; he gave hospitality because in pioneer days he had to give hospitality so as to enjoy it himself when in need. For many years in America you had to take hospitality or die on the prairie; that taught all men hospitality, and much of the tradition stays in the American spirit. That is why the stranger finds

America so delightful. He is readily admitted into the American home, while he may spend a lifetime in France and be admitted only to a restaurant.

I am perfectly sure that, on an average, the American is warmer-hearted than the European. I have had many instances of this, and one of the most noteworthy was in New England. I am fond of country walks, which the American seems to dislike; his view of life is "automobiles to everywhere and violent exercise at the week end." Therefore, the Americans who saw me trudging the roads were sorry for me, and only in two cases was I allowed to finish my walk undisturbed; in every other case total strangers in automobiles stopped and offered me a lift. I began by refusing, but in one case they looked offended, and, in the second, drove off hurriedly, obviously thinking me insane. Well, that means something; it means sympathy, while I am sure that any American can walk from Spain to Russia without being offered a lift, unless he asks for one, and then he might not get it.

A fuller sense of the American affectionateness is found in the use of Christian names. It surprises the Englishman to find a clubroom greet a popular member with a shout of, "Hello, Jake!" At a party he gets lost among the "Tommys" and the "Ogdens." Also he is puzzled by hearing people described as "lovely," or "beautiful." When he is promised the acquaintance of "a wonderful boy," it is rather a shock to meet an elderly banker. You may say this is superficial, that it means nothing, and that Tommy will skin Jake

if he gets a chance; that may be, but there is in all things some reality, and I am sure that the American male friendships are very strong; strong, at least, so far as male friendships go. Even if this cordiality is superficial, it does hold something warm, which you do not find in Europe. There is no better friend than an Englishman, if you can get him as a friend; but it is very difficult, and until you succeed he will stay on his guard. On the other hand, an American will take immense trouble over you, waste his time over you, drive you about, get you introductions, secure you privileges. Sometimes this is ostentation, sometimes it is local pride; but human sentiments are always complex, and there runs through it an honest desire to oblige.

You find this particularly in the American of the middle-sized towns. New York is too large for anybody to be proud of; you cannot be town conscious in a city of that size, as you can be, for instance, in Cincinnati. The American is almost invariably proud and fond of his home town. He is always anxious that you should visit it; he will accompany you and show you round; you will offend him if you refuse to go and see the statue of Colonel Judson, who was killed at Saratoga. I am afraid that I have offended many people already by writing a book about America; nearly all those I have met felt that the book ought to be about their city, or at most about their state; I have been told everywhere that "to stay only three days here" was akin to crime.



I take here the opportunity to explain that I have looked upon local interests as components of the general interest. Topeka may be a great city, but it is a great city only because it is an American city. It is difficult to explain these things, because the American seems to take them in a rather personal way. He appeals to you personally, and takes your response in the same way. The personal appeal, which embarrasses many a European, is to me unfailingly attractive. I like the sign near railroad crossings, reading, "Stop, Look, Listen." At St. Louis I was delighted to be told, on the trolley-car standards, "Don't Jay Walk; Cross at Crossing." I felt that I was picked out from among the other jay walkers. This increased my vanity, and everybody knows that the enhancement of one's vanity is the main purpose of one's life. Besides, there is again a certain warmth in this picking out; it is an extreme case to find this warmth even in hotels. At one of these, for instance, I was every day presented with a morning paper bearing a label, "This is your paper." I know this meant only two or three cents, but the way it was done is attractive, familiar; I was being remembered, and one need not seek false emotion in what is mainly kindness.

Kindness is almost universal in America; in my first three months I collected only three deliberate rudenesses, though, doubtless, I deserved many more. I found everywhere assistance and, what the stranger needs so much, information. Sometimes I found a little too much, for the American does not always realize



how lost is the stranger in this immense, complicated system, and so burdens him with detail. The American is often quiet, but he never refuses conversation, and, on the whole, it is better that people should talk too much than too little; this contributes to general sociability and ease of intercourse. Also, conversation helps a man to exhibit himself. Very few of us ever attempt to discover what the other man thinks; we talk so as to assert to him what *we* think; this helps us to discover what we really think. I suspect that the American, more than any other kind of man, his mind being filled with a vast number of physical impressions, needs conversation to sort out these impressions. Burdened by certain forms of national pride, local pride, and personal pride, by old puritanic views and new efficiency views, by sentiment and by ruthlessness, he needs conversation as a sort of clearing house. He has to formulate.

In Europe we do not formulate much; that job was done for us long ago by our family, our class, our school, our university. Most Europeans know what they think, and few of them think much. The American collects so much more, and so indiscriminately, that he needs a process of elimination. He needs to tell you that he believes a thing so as to learn to doubt it. For instance, one often meets an elderly American who explains that a lazy young man cannot live in America, that he is looked down upon, and that the best he can do is to get out of the country. He then goes on to explain that Americans work sixteen hours

a day and cast the proceeds of their labour into the laps of the noblest and purest women in the world. He means all that, as he says it. He really believes there is no *jeunesse dorée* in the New York clubs. He believes that no business man golfs on Saturday morning. He believes that the women, of whom in Chicago alone, last year, thirty-seven thousand were married and six thousand divorced, are the noblest and purest women in the world. He believes it—until he tells you so. Then, unless habit overwhelms him, he settles down into decent doubt. When he criticizes his own country, he is weighing it, unless again patriotic exaltation has become a habit. Sometimes it has, though I have met very little spread-eagleism in America. Possibly spread-eagleism was politely concealed; possibly, too, the praises I have heard of English liberalism, English culture, and English tradition amount to courteous sympathy with the aged that once were great. I do not know. The only real spread-eagle I met, who told me that in America, schools, hospitals, and courts of law were beyond the dreams of Europe, was a galvanized American. These converts, you know! Still, I did meet a lyrical spread-eagle once. He was, he told me, an Elk.

I did not quite know what was an Elk, or a Knight of Columbus. I gathered they were friendly societies, but not quite in the English sense. So, having heard of this particular specimen, I stalked my Elk. He was a middle-aged man in a decent way of business, whose function in my life was to get me in seven minutes

to an Elevated station which required a walk of nine. As we ran, I interrupted his conversation, which was on Kansas City, lead pencils, women, and divinity, and said to him, "What is an Elk?" A change came over him. A dignity arose. He said, "Sir, the Elks are a body of men banded together to assert the principles of humanity and justice that have made this country great." I said, "Yes; but how do they do it?" He said: "Sir, the answer is simple enough. The Elks uphold in this great country the traditions of benevolence, brotherhood, and mutual help which have given rise to the American spirit." I said, "Yes; but how do they do it?" With an inflection of impatience and pain, the Elk replied, "Sir, the Star-spangled Banner that waves over these lands, and the name of the Bird of Freedom, should indicate to you that the pursuit of good morals, the maintenance of the principles of purity, of public spirit, social service, are within the compass of the Elks, and account for the position and progress of this great free democracy." I said "Yes; but how do they do it?" "This is your station," said the Elk, and hurled me on to a sooty stairway. I shall have to find another Elk, but this one is precious to me in a way. He does represent something that is fundamental in all races—namely, lyricism. He represents the intoxication of success, the materialization of the effects of national comfort. One thinks oneself great because one is big, and, instead of explaining, one proclaims.

Nearly all Americans will, to a certain extent,

proclaim, if you talk to them about America. I have met a few Americans who criticized America, but they nearly all belonged to the intellectual class, which does nothing but intellectualize. Those people take a queer pleasure in running down America. They vaunt the culture of France and the courtesy of Spain; they read no American books, but criticize them all the same. They are few, while the mass of Americans who openly boost their country is large. Many of them will criticize America in a temperate spirit, and, more and more, I suspect, the educated American is reacting against certain features of American civilization, such as haste and noise. One thing in him is noteworthy—he is always willing to discuss America. He will state her, explain her, defend her, and the subject never wearies him. That is a profound difference with the Englishman, who, confronted with a foreigner, is more likely to talk to him about the foreign land—that is, if he must. The Englishman would rather stick to safe topics, such as games, or London communications, but if he is dragged into national discussions he will avoid England. It is not that he lacks national pride, but that pride has become to him a habit of mind. He is really more arrogant than the American, for the American takes the trouble to speak for his country, and proclaims as an argument, “I am an American citizen.” The Englishman is much worse. He does not trouble to proclaim, “I am a British subject.” He expects you to know that, and at bottom does not care whether you know it or not, or what you say about it.



The Englishman's complacency is immense: First, there is the Church-of-England God; then there is the Englishman; then there is the Englishman's bulldog; then there is nothing. So, realizing this, I am not with those who are offended by the occasionally loud American patriotism; I know only too well that its occasional loudness means that America doubts itself.

England proclaims her nationality less than any other country in the world, and she values it more unconsciously than any other country because in England everything is so old established that new things do not matter. That is why our naturalization is so easy, while nowadays in America it takes upon itself the airs of ceremony. Some time ago in St. Louis, at Judge Gook's court, twenty-one aliens out of thirty-four were refused American citizenship; one, because he had deserted his family; another, because he had deserted his ship; a third, because he had been in a race riot; another, because he had kept a saloon open on Sunday, etc. No foreigner may comment on this, for a country has the exclusive right to decide whom it will admit as a citizen. It interests me, however, as an evidence of the price which Americans set upon American citizenship. Citizenship here has lyrical value, whereas, in Europe, it has only practical value.

The naturalization method of America suggests that a sort of honour is being conferred upon a man when he is admitted to citizenship. No doubt many jingo Europeans would understand this emotion,



which is foreign to me, but it may be that here we find a faint indication of the craving for distinction which is so strong in the United States. It is commonplace to describe the American ambassador at a continental reception, distinguishing himself from among the uniforms and the decorations by the Spartan democracy of his evening suit. America has made a virtue of this evening suit, but I do not think she likes it. Seventeen seventy-six was the hot fit of democracy and long before 1920 the cold fit came. For many years Americans have shown how much they missed the satisfactions called "honours" which are given in all other countries. It is natural that men should desire honours; it may be stupid, but it is natural; the English are frantic with desire to place behind their names alphabets made up of M.P., D.S.O., J.P., F.R.G.S.; it is a satisfaction to the great-grandnephew of the fourth son of an Italian count to call himself a count; honours are a marvellous means to orderly government. In America the need has shown itself through the many marriages of American girls to members of various aristocratic European families. It is something to get wealth, but it is not quite enough; the natural vanity of man does not thrive on wealth alone. That is why the Americans have invented a number of social ranks.

Business titles are given in America more readily than in England. Men are distinguished by being called "president" of a corporation. I know one president whose staff consists of two typists. Many

firms have four "vice presidents." Or there is a "press representative," or a "purchasing agent." In the magazines you seldom find merely an editor; the others need their share of honour; so they are "associate" (not "assistant") editors. A dentist is called "doctor." The hotel valet is a "tailor." Magistrates of police courts are "judges," instead of merely Mr. I wandered into a university, knowing nobody, and casually asked for the dean. I was asked, "Which dean?" In that building there were enough deans to stock all the English cathedrals. The master of a secret society is "royal supreme knight commander." Perhaps I reached the extreme at a theatre in Boston, where I wanted something, I forget what, and was told that I must apply to the chief of the ushers. He was a mild little man, who had something to do with people getting into their seats, rather a come-down from the pomp and circumstance of his title. Growing interested, I examined my programme, with the following result: It is not a large theatre, but it has a press representative, a treasurer (box-office clerk), an assistant treasurer (box-office junior clerk), an advertising agent, our old friend the chief of the ushers, a stage manager, a head electrician, a master of properties (in England called "props"), a leader of the orchestra (pity this—why not president?), and a matron (occupation unknown).

What does this mean in American psychology? It means that here, as elsewhere, mankind comes to believe in itself only by asserting itself, by decorating

itself with high-sounding names. This is the efflorescence of the human ego, the manifestation of the adorable childishness of man, which holds its sway under the pinions of the Bird of Freedom, just as much as before the indifferent eyes of the Lion and the Unicorn. It is an evidence of the innocence, the splendid capacity for taking clear-cut views, which may give young America the leadership, if not the hegemony, of the world.

I had not heard much about the soul until I came to America. In England the soul is an understood thing, to be taken out on Sunday for exercise; even then it has to behave, to be less evident than one's shadow. To expose one's soul in England looked upon as a minor indecency. Even our magazine writers tend to let it alone, and cause heroes to love heroines from the bottom of their hearts; in the American magazine passion often goes a little deeper. Of course, in America the soul takes peculiar forms; it does not come out as an ordinary Christian soul, but rather as a modern soul, an up-to-date soul. I do not want to seem irreverent, or to poke poor fun, but when in New England one discovers a small town called Mystic, one feels that the soul is going too far.

For the soul, in its new form of mysticism, and its occasional form of spooks, is a rather comic character. Instead of being merely a life essence it becomes militant, it proselytizes, burgeons into new religions, into forms of higher thought, into silence guilds,

"national" faiths, etc. Extraordinary attempts are made to reconcile with a semi-revealed religion the discoveries of what is called science. This is profoundly offensive to "science," which hates to be called by that vague name, and would prefer to see religion reconciled with biology. Consider spiritualism, for instance, and its extraordinary success, so great that at a certain moment American industry was unable to meet the demand for ouija boards. I know nothing about spiritualism, but it is repulsive to my intellect that it should be possible for a jovial party of hardware merchants' wives in Jacksonville to call up for a conversation the spirit of Napoleon. It is repulsive to one's intellect because it is incongruous, and, if it were true, it would make the after-life even more intolerable than the actual life fortified by the telephone. The whole thing is pervaded with fakes which have been exposed again and again; the rest may be true, but what is interesting is not the acceptance of spiritualism by so many people; it is the attempt to explain it. Still more remarkable is the attempt to deduce for moral guidance some lessons from the communications out of the unseen. Reconciliation with scientific fact is generally exasperating to the person who has had any contact with scientific training. I have been quietly told that spiritualistic force is akin to electricity, and when I have asked, "What is electricity?" I have received no answer I could understand. There is a certain type of mystic that whirls itself into intoxication by piling up words such as moron, endoplasm, phagocyte, disso-



ciation, subliminal, etc. It sounds scientific. In fact it is gibberish.

Likewise, love. Most Europeans look upon love as a comparatively simple and temporary reaction, which leaves behind it a certain sediment called affection. According to temperament, they look upon love as a regrettable physical excess, or as a natural desire for intimacy with a person of the other sex; or as a joke; or an act of business; but they very seldom look upon it as a sacrament. In America, I am not so sure of the men. The men do not talk much about love, and I have a suspicion that they do not place it on quite so lofty a plane as their women would desire. It is not in the nature of men to grow rhapsodic over anything; all great rhapsodies, it is true, have come from men, but always from unusual men; the ordinary man has a way of placing love and its consequences among the material facts of life; in Europe the women hold only slightly more refined views. But in America certain peculiarities appear in the conception of love which the American woman proclaims. (What actual conception she holds, as against the one she proclaims, may be a matter for further discussion.) The things that people proclaim are quite as important as the things they believe, because what people say to you is not always what they think, but what they would like to think, or what they would like you to think they think. The American woman's proclamation of the nature of love may be the proclamation of what she thinks love ought to be. Now from America came the



phrase, "Divinity of Sex." It is a phrase that I cannot understand; I can discover in sex beauty, lyricism, exaltation, all that is delightful, much that leads to generosity—I can discover all that, except "spirituality," or "divinity." I suspect that the words, "Divinity of Sex," merely express the fact that the American woman sets upon herself a price higher than does the European. When giving herself in marriage to a man she appears to lay down that she is doing something significant, which honours him by preferment and her by self-sacrifice. Also, she conveys that she is the cradle of the race, forgetting that nature is so arranged as to demand that a masculine hand shall rock this cradle. It seems to be set up that "love" is wonderful; that "the child" is wonderful; that "the race" is wonderful; in other words, exaltation. Whether this is wholly sincere or wholly insincere does not matter very much; the American man hardly ever echoes the point of view, but he never controverts it; he maintains silence and seems to accept the feminine theory. I wonder. . . . Perhaps he does not care.

But, leaving aside for the moment this sex conception, it is interesting to observe certain bizarre intellectual forms that have arisen in America. They are more self-conscious than ours. In Europe, the William Blakes and the Maeterlincks arise more spontaneously than they do in America, because the surrounding atmosphere is hostile or wholly callous. A European mystic has little honour in his own country; his countrymen are never quite sure whether he

is a genius or a lunatic. In America, he finds swift acceptance; his mysticism takes upon itself the appearance of reality, because many Americans are seeking mystical expression. Consider, for instance, the following extract from an extraordinary document, now in my possession, and published at Los Angeles:

The Psychological Solution of Wars.

An interpretation of the American religion of the new civilization, the foremost representative of which is Dr. Julia Seton.

Cosmic dynamics.

Dynamic metaphysics.

To win the war the cosmic way,

Set minds to win the war that way. . . .

That is not an isolated document, nor do I suppose that it originates from a lunatic asylum. It is merely the most remarkable among a number of instances I have taken from books, stories, and pamphlets. It is an intoxication of words, of which you can find instances even in best sellers, such as *Diane of the Green Van*. I have a manuscript before me supposed to be a short story, by a perfectly sane American college girl. On the first page I find the word "cosmic," twice; the word "dynamic," three times; the word "co-ordinate," once; the word "universal," once; the word "harmony," three times. This produces a certain type of literature with a limited number of words. Thus: "universal harmony," "cosmic universality," "dynamic co-ordination," "co-ordinated harmony," etc. In other words, jargon. Now, what does that mean? I have the greatest respect for the American

powers of organization, for much of American literature; I realize quite well that William James, Mr. Theodore Dreiser, Mr. Edison, Mr. Arthur Brisbane, many thousands of people, exhibit variously high forms of intellect. One might make a similar list of English names, but the difference is that in Europe we have only two classes—the intellectual class, and the class which does not aspire to intellect—while America has both, and also a third class—the class which aspires to intellectual *production* or understanding. That class produces those extraordinary literary medleys; it finds divinity in the sex emotion, and not in the hunger emotion, though these are of the same kind; it aspires to contact with an impalpable world, or to some removed and exquisite way of life. Mixed up in this vertigo of words are all sorts of intelligent ideas, ideas on democracy, on birth control, on poetry, house decoration, etc. The intellectual river rushes into every back water, causing frightful confusion. Well, that means something in American psychology.

To me, this impulse toward “cosmic orders,” and so forth, indicates a reaction in the American mind against the mechanical civilization of which I must say something in another chapter. The reaction is highly self-conscious. For instance, a little while ago a woman said to me that a visit to Rome might be expensive, but that “it went to cultural background.” That is self-conscious. The American seems, more than other men, inclined to face his intellectual processes. His moral processes he does not face with any such courage,

but his intellectual processes interest him ; whereas the European is extraordinarily afraid of self-knowledge because this might lead him into ideas. A number of Americans, of late years, have come to revolt against the old ideas of "do no wrong, but be God-fearing" ; and "get on or get out." The first has failed them because it was a purely moral idea which did not content the growing intellectual ferment produced by scores of thousands of college graduates, male and female, who had taken in their culture very quickly in enormous and rather indiscriminate doses ; the second idea of "get on or get out" also failed to satisfy them, because their contact with culture, without teaching them that culture was enough, had taught them that mechanical civilization was not enough. Hence this rush into any intellectual road, and, therefore, into any intellectual blind alley. All intellectual movements are rebellious movements, but some of them, such as the English and the French intellectual movements, are so old established that they have become traditional rebels against power and materialism ; in America, where the intellectual tradition is young, they are still in natural reaction against surrounding materialism. Therefore, they are good things.

Many European intellectuals sneer at the "cosmic harmony," but the fact remains that the jargonists are trying to do something. Some of them are trying to produce works of art, by using the language of the laboratory ; others are seeking a precision in life, an aspiration which they can no longer obtain from the



Christian simplicity ; yet others are trying to project the aloof doctrines of philosophy and metaphysics into a practical realm which shall have application to their lives. If the result is so often hasty, hectic, incoherent, it is largely because the surrounding atmosphere is so favourable, because the Americans are, more than any other human beings, interested in ideas. In Europe, a man with an idea is, on the whole, a nuisance ; if his idea is practical, he may be sent to jail ; if unpractical, he will be put into the comic papers. But in America, in either case, he will be listened to. He will find his public and his party. That is good for him because it enables him to express himself ; but it is bad for him because he finds, ready made, an appreciation which in Europe he would have to tear from reluctant and sluggish minds ; in the intellectual sense, America is perhaps the only place of which it can be said that a prophet sometimes has honour in his own country.

The easy acceptance of the fantastic literature I have quoted may arise from the general American tendency to excess. The whole of the American civilization seems to me wilfully, and often splendidly, excessive. The people seem to find a pleasure in the height of their buildings, in the size of their restaurants. The freak dinner, for instance, where a musical prodigy was concealed in a bush of roses and revealed only when coffee was served, where every guest was presented with a gift worth one thousand dollars, is not only an indication of reckless wealth, but also of a



deliberate desire to do things largely, magnificently, excessively.

One discovers this in the lavish magnificence of American hospitality. It is delightful, but to a pallid European it sometimes proves exhausting. One rides to too many places in too many automobiles; one meets too many interesting people; visits to the opera, to the theatre, to the country club, to the famous view over the valley—all this, so kindly, so generous, is part of the American tendency to do too much, too fast. They do not think that they themselves suffer from it, but I suspect that much of the sensitiveness of American public opinion to newspaper stunts is due to an overstimulated condition of the nerves. Excess brings its penalty in the shape of reaction. The noise of America, the swift movement, the passion for the automobile, a passion so violent that people mortgage their house to buy one—all this is excess.

I have been in American towns of less than twenty thousand inhabitants, and found them closely modelled upon the big towns. The big towns provide excess for the millions; the little towns, excess for the thousands. It is merely a matter of proportion. Sometimes one does not know how to behave. The Englishman is not accustomed to the spaciousness of American hospitality. American hospitality will explain the difference between watermelon, honey dew, and casaba, while English hospitality consists in letting the lunch lie about for you to eat if you like. We are not accustomed to being shown a house in detail—the

labour-saving appliances at work; told the story of the pieces of furniture, of the pictures. The Americans are never weary of this, because their vitality is enormous. It is not only nerves which permit them to do so many things in a single day; it is not only their magnificent climate, which is bright and bracing like champagne; it is the rude strength of a race not yet sophisticated; it is the hunger for impressions of a race just entering into possession of its powers. Hunger and innocence, this defines a vast tract of the American mind.

An idea of this tendency to excess can be found in the advertisements of the newspapers. Advertisements are never very discreet, but they always adjust themselves to the taste of the public. The specialist soon finds out if the advertisement is a success; if it fails it is changed. Consider the two following extracts from advertisements. One recommends a short story called *Two and the Silver Creese*, and reads as follows:

Gosh! if you want tensity, read *Two and the Silver Creese*, a Moro love story by Donald Francis McGrew. When a Moro loves he does it in a 212° Fahr. fashion, as you'll discover when you read this little asbestos romance. Don't read this near the stove.

Here is the second:

*Scrub up your smoke decks and cut for a new pipe deal!*  
—Say, you'll have a streak of smoke luck that'll put pep in your smoke-motor, all right, if you'll ring-in with a jimmy pipe or the papers and nail some . . . for packing! Just

between ourselves, you never will wise-up to high-spot-smoke-joy until you can call a pipe or a home-rolled cigarette by its first name, THEN, to hit the peak-of-pleasure you land square on that two-fisted-man-tobacco. . . . Well, sir, you'll be so all-fired happy you'll want to get a photograph of yourself breezing up the pike with your smoke-throttle wide open! TALK ABOUT SMOKE-SPORT!

The reader will say, as perhaps he has said before: "This is very unfair; you pick out of our newspapers the most blatant headlines of the most ferocious advertisements, and then you say that indicates the American mentality. Allow me to tell you, sir, that in this country there are millions of sober, educated people who, equally with you, feel that—" etc. Which is quite true; a country which was wholly occupied in scrubbing up its smoke decks would not be a success, but it is equally true that this sort of appeal must correspond with a demand of the American mentality—*viz.*, the demand for lyricism, which takes the form of rhetoric and vituperation.

An unfortunate result of this violent stimulation is the national restlessness. I am no enemy of stimulation; indeed, I believe that it is better to be too much stimulated than not stimulated at all, but one can overdo it. I have several times referred to the automobile, and you may think that I am an old-fashioned partisan of the stagecoach, which is not the case. It is good to see that the American city has emancipated itself from the horse, but I do believe that the automobile is having an evil effect upon the country. It has made the centre of some towns almost

uninhabitable. Before a window on North Michigan Boulevard in Chicago, three thousand automobiles pass every hour. The night is filled with mechanical sounds; the throttles are open; the automobiles are parked outside hotels, and the engines allowed to run; it is like sleeping in a garage. The streets are clotted; in Fifth Avenue, for instance, between four and half past five, any fat old lady will walk six blocks while a vehicle passes two. The automobile, at certain hours, is making the traffic of Manhattan unmanageable. It will drive the city of New York into the immensely costly expedient of cutting underground motor roads in the rock, or to the more revolutionary method of building elevated roads over the old elevated railways and over certain cross-streets. All that because scores of thousands of people want to get about. Watch the line of automobiles in the afternoon, near, let us say, the New York Public Library; not one in ten is a commercial vehicle. You will say that this is luxurious New York, but I have seen the same thing in little towns of New England, in St. Louis, in Kansas City. Traffic is mostly composed of people who are getting about for excessive pleasure or hardly necessary business. This leads one to the conclusion that America is getting about to too many places, trying to handle in one day too many jobs, and in one night too many pleasures.

A motor-car run after breakfast, a heavy morning's work, a business lunch party, an excited afternoon's work, dinner at a restaurant, a theatre, a supper party,



a dance, or a run through the moonlight in the inevitable automobile! I do not pretend that this is the everyday life of every New-Yorker, but it is the life to which most of the modern New-Yorkers, rich and poor, seem to aspire. And it seems to be speed for the sake of speed. I have before me an envelope of the Postal Telegraph Cable Company; it bears two mottoes: "Special Rush Service," and, "It Will Hurry Your Answer to Give It to the Boy Who Delivers This Telegram." You will say telegrams generally are in a hurry, but what interests me is the emphasis laid upon haste. This leads to overstrain, and may perhaps lead to hardness. When one has no time one is not gentle, and if the American (honour be to him) did not cultivate gentleness, his would indeed be a ruthless country.

Anyone who thinks that I exaggerate will find confirmation of these remarks in the reactions which appear in America herself against certain sides of her life. For instance, the other day, in the *Metropolitan Magazine*, I read a story where the hero gave a melancholic account of a horrible week-end, where he was taken by his hostess for meals and parties to all the surrounding houses. *He was protesting*. Likewise, in the *Saturday Evening Post*, I found a story called "The Silken Bully," which charges the American woman with brutal selfishness, lawlessness, and exploitation of her husband. I do not indorse these two stories, but would observe that these magazines are very popular, have a large circulation, and do not want



to antagonize it. Therefore, I am entitled to conclude that there exists a protest in America against dominating women, and also against restlessness and haste. Of women we must say something a little farther on; as regards restlessness, I would only add that I have met many Americans who deplore the excessive activity which pervades their country. They say that in America there is no time to live. I do not go so far, but then I am a European, and am so impressed by our sluggishness that I am glad to see America overdoing it a little. That may be better than not doing it at all.

There are also against the national restlessness personal reactions of another kind; one of the most interesting is the new type of cultured American. The older type of cultured American was in a way more American than the new. He was still connected with Emerson and Longfellow; he had strong moral sentiments; he was rather ceremonious, and, on the whole, rather academic. Mr. Bernard Shaw makes an amusing caricature of certain sides of this type in *Man and Superman*; an admirable portrait can be found in *The American*, by Henry James. The remarkable fact about that type was that one could never imagine him as a young man. He was always a well-preserved man of forty-five. Well, there has been a reaction, a modernization. One of the reasons is that during the last fifty years so many people grew rich that they were able to send their sons to college; that in the last twenty years business threw aside the idea expounded

by Mr. Lorimer's hero in *The Letters of a Self-made Merchant to His Son*, that a young man was ruined for business by a college education.

I have met many Yale men in business, and a fair number from Harvard. The most remarkable of all was employed in a large corporation. He was young, but had a good position. As we came in he stood up, perfectly dressed in a suit of grey tweed, wearing spats over admirable boots. As I observed his quiet blue tie and well-laundered collar, his close-cut, but not too close-cut hair, as he welcomed us in a rather high and unmodulated voice, I thought, "I have never seen anything quite like this." We talked. At twenty-eight he had still the undergraduate touch; he did not take himself seriously, as did the old type. He did not talk about the size and power of his corporation, as the old type did, out of vanity or nervousness. He was an ordinary "nice fellow," just any negligent sophomore. But, a little later, we talked business, and the man changed; he grew grave; his mouth hardened; I saw something in his eyes which told me that he was polished only as a sword is polished, that he had what an Oxford man seldom has, an American cutting edge. Here America is producing a high type of humanity, and she will produce it more and more, as wealth learns to value good breeding. It will combine the graces of the Old World with the force of the New World. I have had only a glimpse of the superman, but I feel that he will give a great account of himself in the times to come.

And this is not an isolated instance. A day or two at Harvard, conversation with twenty or thirty young men, reveals something more important than knowledge; it exhibits charming *natural* manners, modesty, firmness. I wish every English visitor could spend twelve hours at Harvard or Yale; it would enable him to avoid the absurd generalizations he often makes. As an American put it to me, "England compares her best with America's worst," which is absolutely true. Not only does the Englishman set up as a standard his own county families, conveniently forgetting England's profiteers, England's lower middle class, the mincing gentility of the antimacassar, the bawling taprooms of our country hotels, but he compares the English gentleman class with any braggart salesman who talks to him in the club car.

It is lamentable because it is so stupid, lamentable because a few dinner parties or week-ends in American homes would show the Englishman that America has a gentleman class akin to his own, in Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Virginia, even New York, which did not come over (steerage) last week, which does *not* struggle for money, does *not* ask personal questions, does *not* boast—a class which discusses without puritanism any subject you like, accepts your eccentricities, cherishes its traditions without obtruding them, indeed, a class which differentiates itself from the English county families, to which it is generally related, by a keenness, an openness to new ideas which should sting the self-complacency and stir the dust

where lie the English families among the debris of Victorianism.

All the same, certain things startle one in America; one of them is the occasional outbreak of puritanism. For instance, when my agent was booking my lecture tour, he issued a prospectus provided with my photograph. A woman's club which had applied for a lecture date refused to engage me because my photograph exhibited me in a dressing gown which exposed my neck. This is quite true; they put it in writing. I suspect that this exhibits one of those deep-buried, puritanic American strains; when I think of that, I smile at the remark so often made that "America has no traditions." America has a profound ethical tradition. She has created in her own mind an aristocracy of God-fearing men and women. She still tends to estimate people according to their morals.

So does England; but England tries to shut her eyes to what may be inconvenient because that makes trouble, while America feels it her duty to inquire; in other words, the American seems more preoccupied with moral questions than is the European. I do not represent the European as a gay and vicious man; I know him too well. England has her Vigilance Society, and France her League for Repressing the Vices of the Streets, just as America has her Society for the Suppression of Vice. Mr. Comstock completed a trinity with Sir Percy Bunting and Mr. Beranger, but in America virtue is not so completely given over to



specialists. Virtue is everybody's business. I have discovered, notably, that in a club of men, where a member drinks, gambles, and runs after women, that member is not called "no end of a dog," as he would be in England, or well liked, as he would be in France; in America he is deplored; you will generally find that in America it is virtue, not vice, earns a man popularity. This is not entirely a matter of repression; I do not know about this question as much as I should like, but if things are what they seem, America is a virtuous country. Though things never are what they seem.

The outside shows the American rather more like the Englishman of 1860, with a dash of Nietzsche, than like the Englishman of to-day. He is domestic, and seems to care deeply for his home, his wife, and children; he talks about them, instead of keeping them in the background, and he very seldom hints at irregular adventures.

Domesticity is part of the American insularity; it is due to the fact that most of the country lies so far from the sea that external influences do not operate. And yet I find it difficult to believe that the American is as moral as he seems. He could not keep it up. The 1910 census showed 6 per cent of illiterates; Senator Borah stated, in 1917, that 70 per cent of American families were living below the poverty line; the disease records, as quoted by Doctor Biggs, are terrifying. America is not worse off than Europe; indeed, she is better off, but in conditions like these it is



impossible for national morality to be as high as is made out.

One has a glimpse of that now and then. I have before me a publication which I will call the "Under-side." Here I find reports of sexual crimes, advertisements of shops where they sell "books on sex questions," pictures of "girls in artistic poses." I find a publication which enables men and women to make "friends" by advertisement. There are books "exposing" white slavery, and even "instructions for the honeymoon." All this stirs in the middle of the drink question, among advertisements of proof testers and stills, which are offered—you will never guess—to people who want to make distilled water.

That sort of thing, which you find in every city, suggests the secret escape from moral restrictions. The newspapers report a great many sexual crimes; this slough which I stir up reveals that in America, still more than in England, vice goes slinking and ashamed, but goes all the same. I find chaos and conflict. The Federation of New Jersey Women's Clubs demands official action to lengthen frocks and to stop cheek-to-cheek dancing; the Federation of New York Women's Clubs demands the removal of legal restrictions on birth control.

I doubt the thoroughness of American puritanism. I have come across a number of men who supported prohibition, and their cellars are full of liquor. Perhaps that is why they could afford the gesture. I have been

over the catalogue of a public library, and discovered that this institution possesses only one book of Anatole France, the mildest of all. Between the surface and the depths I hesitate. But these are only impressions ; it is not my business to pronounce.

## IV

### THE AMERICAN WOMAN

IF I felt that I could avoid it, I should not write this chapter, for I hold that the American woman is a woman before she is an American. I should rather write, with an American slant, an essay on woman unqualified, consider her as affected by the primal emotions of love, hatred, ambition; I fear that my title may misrepresent me, that it may imply separation of the American woman from her sisters, whether British or Eskimo, which is not intended. But, though she may not differ from them essentially, at least among the central masses of the country, her exterior manifestations of character do establish bright contrasts with the woman of Europe. Of those one must take note. One must also take note of the fact that most Americans ask most Europeans, "What do you think of the American woman?" and seem to expect a reply embodying amazement before an entirely new human species.

The stranger's difficulty is made all the more intense by his endeavours to find out what is an American. Is it the descendant of a Pennsylvanian German who immigrated a century and a half ago, or a recent immigrant of British stock, or an Irishman with

forty years' political work behind him, a long Yankee, a square-headed, thick-jowled salesman called Smith, whose father came across as Strubelsky? The questioning stranger finds the problem more puzzling among the women because fashion levels their appearance. He watches the procession of British, Italian, Jewish, Slav types; if he has opportunity to speak with them, their accent is uniform; he asks himself whether their national point of view is uniform, whether the American woman is anything but a European varnished in America. And if that is the case, then the varnish? . . . What is the varnish?

If we assume as an average American type the woman whose parents, of immigrant extraction, were born in the United States, one thing can be said of her in general—her physical attractions are very great. It is no exaggeration to lay down that, though not every young American woman is pretty, she nearly always knows how to seem it. She is excessively well groomed; she takes of her hair and her hands a care that the average Englishwoman does not; she gives intelligent thought to her clothes. However tired, the stenographer presses her skirt every day, and spends upon its renewal money she sometimes needs for food. She outclasses the Englishwoman because she is less given to breaking her lines with bows and frills; she takes trouble with her shoes; she is very near to the Frenchwoman in her style of dressing, except that she uses stronger colours and that she sometimes adds to a simple model gown a trimming one could do without.

Strong colours are not against her; for my part, I am rather tired of the eternal black and white, fawn and grey, of Paris. Some of this lore seems to be imparted at certain finishing schools where she is taught the care of skin, hands, hair, which is never done in an English school, where it is despised, or in a French school, where it would be thought improper. The tendency to decoration is so strong that I have even seen several coloured girls with their cheeks rouged and their mouths made up. This had a little exotic air that was rather pleasing, but it seems to me to represent the highest point of feminine egotism.

Reverting to the problem offered by the admixture of races, though there are no female American types corresponding with the two dominant male types, there is a common facial characteristic. I noticed this soon after arrival, but it was two months before I could define it. You find in America long faces, round faces, dark skins, and fair skins, and yet they are mostly American, in this sense that the features are more marked than they are in Europe. That seems to me to be the definition. The eyes are larger, the lips much thicker or much thinner, the chin and jaw lines more pronounced. The American woman has more emphatic features than the European woman. What is interesting is that in the cities she does not recognize that nature has endowed her with strong features, so she powders, uses lip salve, strengthens her eyebrows, or thins them into half-circular brush strokes, and kohl her eyelids much more than the European. Also,



when the fashion in dress tends toward undressing, she is rather excessive. This may be due to the hot summers; it may point to temperature rather than temperament, but it may also express one side of her psychology. Where the European woman suggests, the American woman proclaims. If I may generalize so far as to say that the English attitude in woman is to sit down and look sweet until someone notices her, that the French attitude is to edge away, but not too far, I suppose I may define the American attitude as a preparation to storming the mild fortress which is called the American man.

I have been told that the American woman does not take pains to attract men, and that is to a certain extent true. I have passed ten months in this country, visited many cities, and been on the lookout for any interesting facts, but I have never seen an American girl give to a man in the street what the English call the "glad eye." That is a matter of method; I feel that she is merely reserving her strength, and that when she decides to go over the top she does it with a speed and vigour which a European would call unmaidenly. She tends to bash rather than to entangle. Excess in clothing and decoration does not at all mean that women are trying to attract men. Women don't dress for men; they know better than that; they know better than waste themselves on a sex so dull; they dress for one another, and half the strain of fashion is due to their knowledge that they are appearing before women, the hardest critics, and the most learned.

I have talked in this sense with a certain number of American men, who did not like the subject much. I find the American point of view on women rather difficult to understand. There prevails in this country a cult—we may call it gynæolatriy—a verbal worship of woman in the abstract which puzzles a person like me, who insists on looking upon women as merely human beings. When an American man talks to one about the nobility and purity of women, about their remoteness from the common temptations of mankind, one is quite as surprised as when one meets the universal cynical type which hates woman and thinks her capable of all crimes. Many Americans are willing to assert that there lies a spiritual beauty in the soul of woman. This again puzzles me, for I do not know what spiritual means; I think beauty undefinable, and am suspicious of the soul. I find it difficult to identify the point of view of the United States of Femininity, because Americans, when you press them, willingly confess that “Frenchwomen are loose, Englishwomen are hypocritical, etc.,” and then, by degrees, allow you to feel that their women are not as other women, that they have a superior idealism, that they are lifted above the grossness of the world—which are chilly things to say of women. They seem to think the American woman incapable of sin, yet all the time one has a queer sense that this rhapsody is recited like a lesson which they have read somewhere, perhaps a lesson which has been proclaimed to them by the objects of their adoration.

The American woman undoubtedly proclaims herself (by word and deed) to the uncommitted male. She is a good partisan of her sex; she thinks it a fine thing to be a woman, while her mate finds no special pride in being a man. I think she herself has set up the standard of virtue by which her men measure her.

The American is more than the European woman conscious of her importance. She is conscious in a double sense—namely, she thinks highly of women in general, and she generally thinks fairly highly of herself in particular. This is not an attack, for no respect is deserved by those who do not respect themselves, but between conceit and self-respect lies an abyss that can be bridged only by common sense. Generally speaking, I have found few American women unduly satisfied with their own charms and capacities, or their position; but I have found a somewhat inflated idea of the value and power of woman in general.

Many American women seem persuaded that no standard exists for their comparison with the Europeans, that they are the product of another age, and that it is their mission to show mankind what women can do. They consider that in coolness of mind, in executive capacity, in logical faculty, in beauty of spiritual imagination, they have attained heights of which their European sisters have not reached the foothills. Women's writings, in American books and magazines, are spattered with phrases that exhibit narcissism. (There is no pathological implication in this, except in so far as self-admiration is a pathological reaction.)

For instance, in *Women and the New Race*, by Mrs. Sanger, we are told that *women*, by controlling birth, *may remake the world*. A little farther on, we are told that upon the shoulders of *woman*, conscious of her freedom, rests the responsibility of creating a new sex morality. These pretensions seem to me not only excessive, but also exclusive; it takes two to make a morality. If women were to enforce a new moral attitude, in which man had no say, we, who for years have been attacking man-made laws, would equally object to woman-made laws.

This brings us back to the American woman's belief that she is not as other women. I have several times received shocked criticisms of the heroine of my novel, *Blind Alley*, who has a passionate though incomplete affair with a married man. In every case I have been asked whether Monica is "a typical English girl," and told that "no American girl would behave like this." Such illusions—the newspapers being filled with sex crimes—must be rooted in vanity. You find this feminine national vanity everywhere. For instance, I was brought into contact with a woman who was to show me that I did not understand her sex, to explain the American woman, so that I might realize the progress and the change brought about in the New World. The question arose between us whether courtship should be practised as an art. I had ventured to write down a few views as to the way in which men should conduct their courtship, so as to obtain from the woman they love the maximum of response.



I had indicated that, in my opinion, any man who can support a woman can get a wife, but maybe will not obtain love. Thereupon followed a detailed statement of the process by which the self-esteem of a woman is encouraged, and elementary notes on the treatment of rivals, the maintenance of freshness in a long engagement, etc. These views infuriated not only the lady in question, but three more of the same kind. I was told that these ideas, these old-fashioned flatteries, these preambles, these devious devotions, are merely boring to the young ladies with direct minds who go around to-day deciding whom they will matrimonially devour. It was added that perhaps Englishwomen were like this, but that it would not do in America. (You see, the *national* ending is inevitable.)

What is one to reply to these inflated statements? Do some women walk the world blindly? Do they not see men striving to gain the regard of a woman who hesitates? Do they really believe that the modern woman, after a period occupied by golf, or noncommittal rides in the Subway, is suddenly asked by a man, "Will you marry me?" and bluntly replies, "Yes, let's get hitched."? I think many do believe this. The woman who is intoxicated with the progress made by her sex can spend a week on Broadway, or, what is still more revealing, a week in small-town socials, and continue to believe that there has been an enormous change in the relations of the sexes. She believes what she wants to believe; in America it is extraordinary how many educated women fail to realize what a faint scratch has



been made on human nature by the last fifty years. They seem to allow nothing for the effect of tradition on the unconscious or subconscious part of the female temperament. Female education in the United States began only seventy or eighty years ago. If you go a little farther back you find Martha Washington making her pickles, fearing God, and keeping her mind free from ideas that did not concern her. Behind those three generations of educated women lie about two thousand generations of women who were not cousins of the ape, but women with a language and a rude civilization. Now, is it reasonable to put the cultivation of two or three generations against fifty thousand years? Can a short course in a prairie university so entirely do away with the traditions, the compulsions, the inhibitions left behind by a period so long that it makes the history of Egypt almost news for this afternoon's newspaper? I do not want to stress this, but I do think that an elementary knowledge of comparative history compels one to laugh aside the idea of a revolution in the female mind, whether in Europe or in America. The difference between this day and a hundred years ago amounts to a varnish; the reformer had better realize that, so that his reforming energies may not be dulled by an over-complacent sense of achievement. This does not mean that the American woman is wrong in feeling pride in the conquests of her sex, nor is she wrong in thinking that she has gone farther in freedom than her European sisters. Only she has not gone quite so far as she thinks.

In the days of chivalry the knight went on his knees to his lady, but he took this as a formality. The kneeling attitude of the modern American seems honest. He definitely admires his women. He does not, like the Parisian, stress their elegance; like the Frenchman, their beauty; while vaunting their smartness and good looks, he especially values their moral quality; he accords them a certain dignity, which Europe refuses them. America is definitely a woman's country. But when you consider the facts a little more closely you begin to be doubtful. I don't know in how many hundreds of crowded street cars I have ridden, but only two or three times have I seen a man give up his seat to a woman.

I quite understand that American life is hard and competitive, but this does not quite accord with the goddess theory. Likewise, one is struck by the position women seem to have attained in business, until one has dealings with their firms. I have had to do with many American business organizations; in a number of cases I had to make arrangements with an underling. Whenever the underling was a man, all went well; in several cases where I had to deal with a woman, no further notice was taken of the messages. I have a vision of the offices where these women carried their messages, of the man in charge listening to his male subordinate, and telling the woman to run away and play.

This, of course, is not a generalization, but merely an indication. I have been equally surprised by the

conquests made in business by American women. It is rather a shock to a European to meet a pretty girl of twenty-seven, to hear that she is employed in a drug corporation, and then to discover that she is a director. A shock to find a woman running a lawyer's office entailing annual expenses of seven or eight thousand dollars, and making a living. It is a surprise to find the American stenographer earning four times as much as her European sister. All those shocks, however, arise out of particular instances, and, though I agree that the American woman has made herself a good position, when I go through a business-reference book I find that not one in a hundred of the leading names is the name of a woman. In America man still rules; all you can say is that he does not rule women so harshly as he does in Europe.

These suspicions as to the actual position of women in America are strengthened when one investigates a little more closely the achievements which have been so loudly advertised in the press. Consider, for instance, the position of women in the American civil service. The Women's Bureau of the United States Department of Labour has recently issued a report on "Women in Government Service." During the period considered, 86 per cent of the women appointed were given salaries lower than \$1,300 a year, while only 36 per cent of the men were given positions as low as this. The report goes on to show that as the amount of salary advances, the number of women appointed decreases. For positions higher than \$1,300

a year, only 5 per cent of the women are appointed, as against 46 per cent of the men. If we view the situation a little differently, and compare government appointments with the number of women who passed the requisite examination for the higher posts, we find that, while 59 per cent of the female candidates passed the clerical tests for middle positions, the commissioners did not appoint, as one might think they would, 59 per cent of the women to the middle positions. They appointed 72 per cent; the difference of 13 per cent represents female candidates who were given a lower position instead of the middle position they had won in open contest. And if we consider the posts where special training is required, while 30 per cent of the female candidates were eligible, only 15 per cent were appointed. As the examinations harmonize as nearly as possible with the vacancies, it follows that in every case women were deprived of anything between a quarter and a half of the rights which they obtained by open examination in competition with the men.

The reader should not conclude that I am making a case against the treatment of women in America. I am quite aware that in every way of life woman is better treated in the United States than in any other part of the world, that the marriage and divorce laws, notably, in many states, are her excessive partisans. But it would be foolish to believe that woman's battle has been completely won in the United States. She still has a great deal to do to achieve equality; she had better realize this, and struggle for it, than be led away



by sentimental eulogies of her achievements, and more or less dishonest proclamations of her supremacy.

Two instances of the lyrical exaggerations which lead American women to believe that the male world is open to them, I find in an article in the *Pictorial Review* called "Two Women Lawyers at the Head of Their Profession." One is Mrs. Georgia P. Bullock, deputy district attorney and public prosecutor of Los Angeles. That is a high-sounding title, and one must not underrate the achievement of Mrs. Bullock; but, if one looks carefully into details of her work, one cannot avoid the feeling that she is the deputy district attorney with emphasis on the *deputy*. It is true that she goes into court to prosecute, but it is permissible to doubt whether she is given the more important prosecutions. Furthermore, her special work appears to be the settlement of disputes between husbands and wives, the collection of money from defaulting husbands. In other words, she seems to be merely a probation officer on a large scale. I do not say that her duties are unimportant, but I do say that they are much less responsible and much less independently performed than her title would suggest.

The second case is that of Mrs. Annette Abbott Adams, described as the first woman Assistant Attorney-General of the United States. Here, indeed, is a high-sounding title, but as one reads the details one feels more and more that Mrs. Adams is not so much the Assistant Attorney-General as the assistant *to* the Attorney-General. Here again is a woman who goes



into court and pleads, but here once more is a woman whose work seems mainly to be the examination and preparation of cases for the decision of her male chief. Hers is a powerful post, but it has nothing of the supreme. She is not mistress of her office. She may have men under her, but she has men over her. Until a woman actually occupies a Cabinet post, or the sole headship of a government department, the case will not have been made; until then one is justified in saying that the people who make out that the American woman has got to the top are either untruthful or sentimental.

One of the most interesting features of the American woman question is the supremacy of the girl. In Europe the girl hardly counts at all; in Scandinavia, Russia, Germany, she has, to a certain extent, emancipated herself, but has thereby lost a little in bourgeois consideration. In the south of Europe, and even in France, she is still a chattel of the family, while in England she is completely eclipsed by the young married woman. It is a remarkable thing in an American summer hotel to see the owners of automobiles filling their cars with young girls, while the young matrons are left behind. Yet the young married woman is far more attractive, far more amusing than the bread-and-butter miss. Except in rather fast circles, she seems in America to be almost entirely ignored. Everything goes to the girl—money for college, for training, social consideration; she is encouraged to waywardness, as if the men took a delight

in her freshness, her mischievousness, and enjoyed her youthful petulance. It is rather regrettable in a way, for it leads to the conclusion that the American woman's good time is short.

After her marriage she can assert herself over her husband; if she is rich she can attain a big social position, be fêted, photographed, but she is not the catch of the season; she is the caught. If she is poor, she is taken little notice of; she is not counted as a woman; her husband is supposed to provide courtship, and he is seldom at home. If, as is most likely, she has to do a lot of housework because she finds no help, she loses her looks rather quickly. Her skin dries; at twenty she is exquisite; at thirty-five nerves and boredom have aged her. Since her marriage she has not counted. Many will remember the triumph of Miss Alice Roosevelt, who was described as "Princess Alice"; since her marriage she has not been heard of as "Queen Alice." She may now be a social leader, but she has ceased to "star." A debutante is a normal star, which sets when changed from Miss to Mrs.

The American girl has the time of a butterfly; it is not a long one, but it is a better time than the European's. If she works, it is a national custom to entertain her, to give her things, and this may have something to do with the development of her character. I hesitate to dissect anything so complex. I suppose that excessively hard pictures of her were made by Henry James in *Daisy Miller*, by Mr. Owen Johnson in *The Salamander*, and by Mrs. Wharton in *The*

*Custom of the Country*, but I do believe that a certain hardness must afflict the American girl, owing to excess of good things which she enjoys very early and very easily. When one obtains things easily one looks upon them as a natural right. If then one's rights are flouted one grows peevish.

It is rather interesting to listen to the American girl when she visits England; she can't understand the man who gives her no candies or flowers, who seldom takes her to a theatre, and who actually expects her to amuse him instead of working to amuse *her*. I confess that I don't like her as well as the American married woman, who has been reduced by work and difficulties to a state devoid of petulance. She has lost a few illusions. She is no longer leading the rather excited life of the well-to-do girl, and the fairly excited after-hours life of the popular working girl. An Englishwoman who has lived in America many years sends in the following criticism of the American girl: "She accepts life as it is and makes the most of it; she neither digs up corpses nor broods over injuries; she goes on to the next adventure life offers, ignoring the past. She sheds few tears, would consider the fostering of her soul absurd, the pursuit of beauty irrelevant. She lives untouched by beauty and sorrow." I reproduce, but neither assent to nor differ from this.

It is the American girl, more than the American woman, who embodies the national restlessness. She is always meeting young men in a queer, comradely way; she is always on the telephone, making a date;

automobiles appear for her late in the evening; she goes out with the moon and returns with the sun. There is something bright, almost metallic about her, and the Englishman grows bewildered when he tries to understand the process of starvation which turns her into the modest and even resigned American wife. I am picking my words; in spite of their proclamations, I doubt whether the American man is quite as much at his wife's feet as is made out. It seems to me that he respects his wife as he respects an expensive picture. He talks a great deal about the high qualities of women, but tends to treat them like little dears. He seems to revere women in general, but perhaps not in particular, his wife being the most particular of instances.

In America women do have a good deal of power, but I suspect that this is because the men are so busy that they have no time to argue, and too little time to exercise all the powers themselves. So they hand over some of the minor powers, and honestly believe that this constitutes a female coronation. That is why the well-to-do married woman in America generally strikes me as unhappy. While the poor man's wife lives the universal hard but human life of the poorer European wife, the wife of the man of middle fortune seems eaten up by vain ambitions. But even she is less unhappy than the rich wife, for her husband works short hours and gives her companionship, while too many rich wives see their overworked, business-haunted husbands only at an occasional evening meal, when guests separate them; she is alone while he travels;

hence her frantic search for amusements, faiths, causes, social life, movement, always movement. My mental picture of the rich American wife is a grim one; while the rich Englishwoman is often bored by her husband, the American equivalent is bored by having no husband at all. Within a few years of her marriage her lover goes back to his office and does not come out again.

*At a small but high-browed gathering (often, but not only, in America).*

YOUNG LADY: "Mr. George, I'm just crazy to know what you think of Miss May Sinclair."

MR. GEORGE: "Well . . ."

YOUNG LADY: "Don't you think her books are full of cosmic universality? Oh, do tell me what you think."

MR. GEORGE: "You mean . . ."

YOUNG LADY: "What I like about Miss Sinclair is just that—her sense of the universal cosmos. Now in my home town in Oregon they want to know just what you think."

MR. GEORGE: "From the . . ."

YOUNG LADY: "If you think she co-ordinates the analyses of the psyche of the characters, then what I want to know is how she correlates the theory of the moron with that of the urning. . . ."

MR. GEORGE: "I . . ."

[YOUNG LADY *discusses Bergson and the Matriarchate.*

MR. GEORGE: "You . . ."

[YOUNG LADY *discusses Sinn Fein and the decay of taste.*



MR. GEORGE: "If . . ."

[YOUNG LADY *discusses Mr. Carl Sandburg, Long-fellow, psychoanalysis, Mrs. Fiske, prohibition, spooks, Alexander Hamilton, the negro question, the Barrymores, the exchange problem, and Yellowstone Park.*

MR. GEORGE: "When . . ."

YOUNG LADY (*rapturously*): "I'm so glad to have met you. You've no idea, Mr. George, how they hang upon your slightest word way out in Oregon. I do love to hear you talk."

[*She continues. MR. GEORGE is later discovered concealed in the refrigerator.*

That sort of thing rather worries one. Because of it, perhaps, I have spent in America little time in literary circles and much more in places where they talked of copper and of corn. But, though it is tiring, it is not so absurd as it sounds; indeed, it has significances which should be neither ignored nor derided. My impression of the American woman is that on an average she is intellectually more developed than the European; potentially, she is not superior, but in development she is. The American woman is to the European what a tilled field is to an untilled field. She is infinitely better informed, more interested in new ideas, more ready to accept a new theory of life, just as her man, compared with the European, is readier to accept a new invention. There is hardly anything in which one may not hope to interest her; the travelling Englishman is continually surprised to encounter in

cities of thirty thousand inhabitants large groups of clubwomen who meet month after month, and year after year, to hear lectures on literature, social questions, foreign lands. He discovers in their houses the best new books ; he is asked questions which reveal acquaintance with the world's movements ; he receives the expression of views which only a year before were being expounded at the Sorbonne or at Jena. England has nothing like this. In a small English town you generally discover one or two delightful and cultured women, who are more or less miserable because they find the men as stupid as men know how to be, and intelligent female society non-existent. The brilliant Englishwoman in the country must shut herself up with her books ; there is nothing else for her. The brilliant American woman, on the other hand, has this unique outlet of club life, which draws together most of the women of brains that live in the locality, and also a large number of women of inferior intellectual capacity, who honestly want to improve that intellectual capacity, are anxious to get hold of all the new ideas and manifestations of art. Only in very big English cities do women have clubs, and even then one might say that in those institutions the Englishwomen assemble to gulp tea, while the American women assemble to gulp ideas.

Many American men laugh at the women's clubs. They find these places humorous. Also they like to pretend that clubwomen wear bloomers. But, having by now visited a large number of women's clubs all

over the country, I know quite well that every one of them is a centre for culture and stimulus. The eagerness with which an idea is received by American club-women is the most hopeful side in American civilization. It seems the most hopeful because the action of the women, which is now only beginning to make itself felt, amounts to a reaction against the money-getting male. Leaving aside the artist and the scientific genius, it appears that in all countries the man is to-day less vivid, less open-minded, than the woman. This is particularly the case in England, where the average man is a stupefied creature, intellectually much inferior to his wife. The average American woman is, it is true, less superior to the average American man than is the average Englishwoman to the average Englishman, but she does outdo him in her keenness for new outlooks. Thus she becomes the force that leads to the cultural development of her country.

Naturally, if I may use an old aphorism, "one makes no omelet without breaking eggs." The sad conversation I had with a young lady, which is reproduced above, is an instance of what can happen to a woman who has taken in her culture in too large doses and too fast. Very commonly, when you meet a well-educated American woman, you find that the conversation runs more than is comfortable on French literature, Claudel, Marcel Proust, Paul Fort; you will suffer quotations from Westermarck; you may drift into general ideas, philosophy, psychology. That embarrasses the Englishman for two reasons: one of

them is that he is accustomed to talking to women about plays, games, holiday resorts, etc., or, if he belongs to a more evolved type, of love. The second reason is that he is not accustomed to being told what the woman thinks; he is accustomed to tell her what *he* thinks, and to being helped to develop what he chooses to call his ideas by a minimum of contradiction. So the American woman worries him. He finds that she is using him as a sounding board to try her latest song; he feels he is being lectured; and if, as is often the case, she changes the subject at frequent intervals, he fears he is being jabbed. As a rule, he therefore dislikes that type and is thankful when he escapes to the American girl. Unfortunately, the American girl seems to expect him to play golf and tennis, to swim and climb trees in a single morning, so the vitality of the American feminine rather worries him.

What worries him particularly in the American woman is the presence of this active, prehensile mind within an attractive form. He meets a woman in the middle twenties; she has a clear, beautiful skin; she is well manicured; she wears an attractive frock of chiffon, which is not crumpled; she is a woman with whom he feels he ought to exchange some sentimentalities, this being the thing to do. Only he does not know how to begin. She is too serious, too interested; she seems too aloof from these natural things. If he is strongly attracted, he considers with a certain misery that these well-cut lips are wasting their time in discussing psychoanalysis and that he might find them better

employment—if only he knew what to do. Should he, he wonders, begin by an epigram out of Bernard Shaw? He asks the American man, who, he naturally concludes, knows something of the emotional temperament of his countrywomen. The American man, if that day he is in a cynical mood, instead of his normal state of rhapsody, gives him advice which I cannot reproduce here, and the Englishman sadly shakes his head and walks away.

The difficulty of the European is that he generally looks upon sex attraction as the basis of all relations between men and women. To a great extent he is right, in this sense that between every man and every woman who like each other at all there is at least a streak of that attraction. But while the European is accustomed to viewing that streak through a microscope, in America he has to use a telescope. So he flounders in Bergson, and tries to discuss pragmatism; he tries to get back to the firm ground of his intersexual concept. Sometimes, when he plunges and induces the woman to talk of love, his trouble increases, because he finds the intellectual American woman inclined to look upon love as something between a sacrament and a laboratory test. He encounters a high idealism about "the Divinity of Sex," which seems to him as fantastic as it is cosmic. He is told that love is not so simple as the symbolic holding of hands. It must be dosed and analyzed before practice; it must be organized into a conjugal eucharist, prepared for, practised on the appointed day, certified by Doctor Freud as well



as by Mr. Pussyfoot Johnson. The Englishman becomes horrified; he is in the middle of things he cannot understand. The native kisses knew less complexity; there was less sense of national welfare in his embraces of yore. It is only by degrees that he grasps that the passion of two individuals is not an intimate thing. All his life he has been making a mistake about that. He begins to realize that the people he calls lovers are merely delegates of the race; he conceives it as possible that in days to come they may be duly elected (for three years of the duration of the boon in divorce) by a jury of matrons. So he flounders among the latest theories of psychiatry and the newest statistics of the congenitally blind until at last he struggles on to the firm, safe old English ground of commonplace and says, "Yes, I see; one must not be selfish." To which he receives as a reply, "The sex relation must be egophobocentric."

All this, of course, is on the surface; I develop this aspect only because the visiting Englishman is so easily deceived by that surface. What he does not understand, until he takes trouble, is that the new and swift education of the American woman is responsible for a certain rawness in her culture. What has happened is that, within half a century, the American woman has acquired more information, considered more ideas, than she could assimilate in thrice the time. Skyscrapers are built at the rate of a floor a week; an attempt has unconsciously been made by the American woman to construct her mind at that pace. But it is

not so easy to modify the mind as to hasten the laying of the inanimate brick. An idea planted in a mind is not inanimate. It is a thing that develops into a sometimes quite unexpected form. An idea which was planted for a lily often turns out, when full grown, to be a hollyhock; and another lily may produce, not a hollyhock, but a chrysanthemum. The result is that, having started with a perfectly orderly bed of lilies, put in a little hurriedly, without thorough examination of the bulbs, the ultimate result is a garden in a state of some disorder in which, human nature being what it is, grow a certain number of weeds.

This metaphor should not be taken as an attack, for it is better to plant rather at random than not to plant at all, but I think it explains what I mean—that the intellectual ambition of the American woman has proved so swift, so greedy, so magnificently open to the newest things, that it would be unreasonable to expect it to produce everywhere an entirely balanced state of mind. The American woman is making intellectual experiments. Already she is ahead of the European in variety of product. As time goes on, she may be less anxious to seek novelty and prove more inclined to proceed with the ordering and qualification of her present collection. Meanwhile, she is on the right road from the point of view of her development. Whether this road will ultimately lead her into cool intellectuality, whether intellect will be absorbed for the strengthening of emotion, is impossible to say, but she is doing one great thing—she is shaking

free from the intellectual stagnation which for so many centuries kept her so enslaved.

Believing as I do that in fundamentals such as love human beings change very slowly, it is difficult to generalize on the love emotion in the United States. It is impossible and untrue to say that human passions are in America more developed or less developed than they are elsewhere. That is the sort of thing which one does not know. But one can go so far as to compare two nations by saying that a certain type (common to both) is more prevalent in one race than in the other. One encounters frigid Sicilians and fanciful Swiss, only one does not encounter them very often. The Englishman in America is considerably puzzled as to the love relations of the inhabitants, partly because climate and race make them so various, partly because they are abundantly discussed and therefore obscured by words and expositions of idealism. Also, he comes across amusing contrasts. He may drift into a radical group where, in presence of several people, a woman will say, "I am suffering from sex starvation." On the other hand, he may encounter a number of women who declare it sinful to smoke a cigarette. If, as he should, he makes allowances for extremes, he is puzzled by the public behaviour of men and women.

One case that occurs to me is that of a couple whom I was able to watch unobserved. The man belonged to the *viveur* type; the woman did not look unapproachable. For five days they were continually in each other's company. They obviously enjoyed it, to the

exclusion of others. Their conversations were continuous, and yet I never saw between them the slightest familiarity, even when once, by accident, I came across them in a dark garden; they were sitting well apart, talking, talking—as if there were something in this idea that comradeship can exist between woman and man. This is not a solitary case. American men and women are either more capable of purely mental relations than are Europeans; or they are more careful to conceal what may lie behind the mental; or the women set upon themselves such a price that they are able to repel familiarity. It seems to me that one of these three solutions must apply. If the first or the third is the correct one, this must mean that the frigid type is more common in the United States than it is in Europe. One hesitates to conclude in a manner so sweeping, but the behaviour of couples leads one in that direction.

For my part, I suspect that the impulses of the American women, though much the same as those of the European women, are to a certain extent inhibited by two factors—the materialistic civilization and the survival of puritanism. One should not underrate the effects upon the feminine temperament of the haste, restlessness, and hectic intensity of American life. The noise of the streets, for instance, must have an effect; it has even been suggested to me that the rather high voice of the American woman is due to the effort she must make to dominate the surrounding sounds of traffic. But that is a detail; what I am thinking of

is that the effort to get on, to make money, to enjoy all the life that can be torn from sleep, is likely to cause mental anæmia, which is unfavourable to emotional indulgence. Purity can very well be a form of exhaustion; one's mind may be so full of things to do, appointments to keep, faces to remember; one may be so over-worked, or so overplayed, that one literally has not the time for those brooding states of mind where flourishes the impulse to emotion. I have the impression that the American woman of the towns is generally a tired woman; she goes too hard at work and too hard at play to have energy for the dallyings which occupy her European sisters.

Before touching on the puritanic question, one must remember that one of the results of intense American life, of its need for pleasure, is the need for money. The American man, so often cynical, comes more and more to look upon himself as exploited by women, and this whether he is married or single. He seems to discern a certain hardness, particularly in the American girl, who appreciates him if he can afford to give her a good time, to present her with the many things which she violently desires. Fairly often, in the magazines, I find stories where the woman is shown as demanding of man more than he can afford, and these are more common than tales of male selfishness. Briefly, there is a masculine revolt against the privileges gained by women when they were few. This does not imply hostile criticism on my part. In the first place, it is quite natural that a young girl



should desire to possess things. In the second place, it seems to be a national custom to spoil the American girl. It is not so much a question of greed as a question of habit; if, as may happen, the American girl thinks poorly of the man who does not take her to the theatre or present her with candies, she is only expressing what the European woman would feel if a man forgot to remove his hat. Briefly, I do not believe that the mercenary instinct goes very much deeper than it does in Europe. It may express itself more flagrantly; it is more brutal to call a husband a "meal ticket" than a "good match"; but expression is nothing by the side of fact. The American woman is often getting what the European would like to get. Both are ready to make concessions to obtain these things, and both of them will concede as little as they can, which is humanly normal. If the American woman "gets away" with it, while the European seldom does, it is because American public opinion is prepared to let her "get away" with it. Her aspiration to money arises partly from the insecurity of American life, where fortunes are risked and jobs insecure; it connects with the intoxication of swift-made fortunes. Her demand for a good time is the obvious reply to her men's financial Napoleonism. She is in no sense abnormal in her aspirations; whether she is inhibited in her responses I do not know.

My own belief, judging from a number of inquiries, is that no sensible essay can be written on this subject without taking into account the temperament of the

American man. After all, women are what men make them, and men what women make them. In spite of the life lived at a few smart and continental holiday resorts, I believe there is less moral slackness among educated American women than among the English equivalent. The tradition of the country is against it. Marriage is favoured; after marriage, either the household cares are so heavy, or the social pleasures so whirling, that there is less need for emotional stimulant than there is in soberer lands. Lastly, the American divorce law makes irregularity unnecessary; the rich man and the poor man can, by shifting their capital or their labour from state to state, live in legal free love by means of frequent divorce. Only the man in the middle is tied up. The fact that last year there were two hundred more divorces in Chicago alone than in the whole of England and Wales illustrates what I mean by legal free love. In all this the American man appears as an enigmatical figure. He seems to me at the same time forward and backward. He is aggressive to women in trifling ways, but seems to hold back when the situation grows intense. He will use a chance opportunity in an elevator, but will not create one in the street, as if he were afraid of something, as if he were leashed. To a certain extent he is leashed by local laws, which thrust upon loose men financial, and even criminal responsibilities, which appal the man of middle fortune. In the very rich and very poor ranks of society this does not operate so much, and the newspapers report many sex crimes

and misdemeanours. But I doubt whether it is the law makes this change in manners; as a rule it is manners make a change in law. I suspect that the women maintain their standard by establishing moral ascendancy. They do not repel attacks; they do not have to. Thus I discern less coldness than freedom from temptation. If they are tempted, it is so far, and not farther. Hence, the surprise of the European who finds advances so readily repelled. The woman he approaches is so unaccustomed to such advances that she repels him instinctively.

This may to a certain extent have modified the temperament of the American woman; being insufficiently stimulated; being inflamed with desire for clothes, automobiles, residence in the best hotels—briefly, money; being trained to believe that all will be given her—she may have lost part of her capacity for giving. She may have become slightly sterilized from the emotional point of view; the wifely tyranny that some men complain of in America is probably traceable to that. This tyranny is also traceable to the puritanism which still flickers in most Americans, completely dominates certain regions, and in general the small towns. I mean by puritanism not so much prohibitions as an attitude of mind. In this sense it may generally be said that the American tendency is to coat with a film of impropriety all facts and ideas affecting passion. Though radical and worldling circles express themselves freely, most American intercourse is fettered. Jokes are made against the

married relation, but they are seldom more depraved than those of Mutt and Jeff; there are conversational parallels to "Bringing Up Father," . . . but it is seldom suggested that Father needs bringing up from the point of view of fidelity. Indeed, the suppressions are so intense that if you look down a list of divorces filed for hearing, you will find that nearly all allege failure to maintain, desertion, or cruelty. When adultery exists, the tendency is to hush it up if other causes suffice to justify divorce. I doubt whether the American woman is by herself responsible for this state of things; all over the world man appears more conventional than woman, and there is no reason to think that the American woman (much as she likes to think so) differs so greatly from her sisters. But I suspect that the suppressions maintained by men are so maintained because American men seem to feel that they owe respect to the delicate sensibilities they attribute to their women. As an American said to me, "We are living in 1860; we still think that the ladies are brittle and should be carried about on velvet pads." Realizing, unconsciously or consciously, the practical value of this respect, it may be suggested that the American woman encourages it by merely verbal displays of prudery; in other words, she avails herself of a favourable condition which she does not alone bring about; such American puritanism as exists originates largely from man.

The American woman generally gives her support to this puritanism, which is natural enough in a society

where. capitalism alone has power, where nearly all capital is vested in the male, and where puritanism enables woman to make capital out of purity. She has an interest in limiting the normal brutality and polygamous instinct of man by setting up taboos; she has an equal interest in imposing upon him a narrow code of language, suggestion, and approach, because this handicaps the male capitalist in his contest with the sexual capitalist. From woman's point of view, manners make the shield that shelters morals. The situation appears curious only when we consider the intellectual grade of the women who maintain the hard moral standard for others and possibly themselves. While they proclaim their contempt for wiles, they remember to bewitch; they profess aversion from male rule, and demonstrate only to the extent of refusing to wear a wedding ring; they proclaim themselves free, and yet do not reject gifts. It sounds puzzling, like all female problems when frankly stated. But, like all female problems, it is simple enough, and sums itself in the old human desire to have the cake and eat it; more than any other the American woman seems able to do this.



## V

### MEGAPOLIS SOUTHWARD

I MAY offend a Londoner by giving this name of Megapolis to New York. For London, with its population of seven and a half millions, lays claim to the title of "The Great City." It is true that New York itself has a population of little over five and a half millions, and that even if we add the surrounding territory of Yonkers, Mount Vernon, Jersey City, Newark, etc., the total might be less than that of London; but New York is a city great not only in area; it is great in height, in spirit, in emotion. I find it infinitely sympathetic, endowed with much of the grace of Paris, but more magnificent. Magnificence is the first thing that strikes one in New York. Its great buildings, its spreading luxury, its lights, its air of sceptical pleasure, its moral anæsthesia, its cool ferocity, all that suggests republican Rome with a touch of Babylon.

I love New York. I think I understand it. It is in America the only female city, a city of cynicism and of lace, a more intense Paris, a Vienna disguised in the garments of respectability. It is all the cities. Where Chicago offers energy, New York offers splendour. It

is the only American city where people work and play ; in the others they work. I feel that inevitably in the second generation, if not in the first, the oil and cotton of the South, the wheat of the Middle West, come to fuse themselves in the crucible of pleasure that lies on the Hudson.

Perhaps that is why most of the other cities call New York degenerate, because it is not so much an industrial city as a city of commerce, a city of financiers, and a place which people desert on Saturday mornings to play golf. That is not degeneracy. Indeed, to me, New York is the contrary—it is regenerate ; it is the microcosm of the new civilization of America, of which the Middle West is the basis and the South the memory.

The colossal scale of New York naturally makes upon the stranger his first important impression. The American does not realize what a shock New York can be to a European who has never before seen a building higher than ten floors ; the effect is bewildering. The monster hotel where the stranger makes his first acquaintance with America is itself a shock. I began in an hotel which seems to have two thousand bedrooms and to carry a rent roll of \$20,000 a day. In other words, this is Brobdingnag, the land of the giants. Gigantic chaos, that is the first feeling I had in New York. Differences forced themselves upon me. I missed the public houses of England and the cafés of the Continent. (The soda cafés, where so few people sit down, did not seem to correspond.) Fifth Avenue, people so many, traffic so thick that one has to take one's

turn at a crossing, that police control has become mechanical, beyond the power of man. Then one goes into a store; one wanders through endless departments, on endless floors, one goes through tunnels and never comes out by the same block as one went in. There is so much in the streets; everything hurries—motor cars, street cars, railway cars. In the restaurants endless vistas of napery and crystal extend away. One goes up Broadway at night to see the crowded coloured signs of the movie shows and the theatres twinkle and eddy, inviting, clamorous, Babylonian! You see, all the great cities of the present and the past come into my mind and make my judgment fantastic. For New York is all the cities. It is the giant city grouped about its colossal forest of parallelepipeds of concrete and steel. One can't find one's way. The plan of the city is simple, but it is so large and hangs so heavily over you that you become dazed. You can't find the news stand in the marble lounge; the pages whom you sent on a message do not come back, but fade in the distance, grow old and die in a distant region, perchance to be buried under leaves. It is such a little thing, a page boy, in Brobdingnag! He is so much below scale. Such a scale! They brought me a telephone message the first day. It comprised twenty-two words and was written on a sheet of paper three feet four inches long. Here indeed is the toy of a giant. It is only little by little, as you grow used to this enormity, that you reach comfort in New York, that you look casually at the Equitable Building, and contemptuously

at the little apartment houses of eight floors. Also, you discover with relief that in New York any fool can find his way, unless he goes south of Washington Square. Later on, new troubles come, for one street looks like the other and you cannot remember numbers. It is only by degrees that streets acquire personality in your mind.

You come to know that on East Forty-second stands a railway station; that in Fourteenth Street you may buy "Louis-the-XIVth-Street furniture," as a New York wit has put it; that West Fortieth runs south of Bryant Square, while West Fifty-ninth marks the beginning of Central Park. Broadway worries you a lot. It is always turning up on the wrong side of the town; you resent its irregularity: you are becoming an American.

Standing by the building plot between Vanderbilt and Park Avenues, and looking westward, you see a strange thing—an enormous office building against the back of which outlines itself the spire of a church. A big office and a little church; what a change since the Middle Ages! And the little New York church is vigorously, resolutely Gothic. They nearly all are, in New York, as they are elsewhere. Even in Fifth Avenue, vast erections of stone are fretted into trefoil and cinquefoil, garnished with finials and gargoyles, spired and flying buttressed, as if Chartres and Canterbury had crossed the ocean. It is tragic. Nothing is more beautiful than the American grain elevator, and nothing seems so absurd as the American

Gothic church. I know the English are just the same. They, too, erect Gothic churches; I have even seen a chapel made of galvanized iron fitted with an ogival window, but that is Europe, traditional Old Europe, not modern America.

One might have expected America to realize that Christianity existed before Gothic architecture, and that there is no association between the two. America might have escaped from the thrall. This mechanical, conventional, worn-out Gothic, how disgusting, how outrageous it is to see it go up to-day! What wooden feeling that reveals! What lack of freshness, lack of courage! And to think that this rag doll of the ages should inhabit Brobdingnag! that Gothic—this ecclesiastical ready-to-wear—should be accepted in the country which is to-day the sole possessor of a new architecture!

In Europe architecture died in 1860, when the great Georgian style had given way to the porticoes and columns of Victoria, and to the barracks of Baron Haussmann. Then creation ceased. Of late years the English history of architecture, particularly in domestic work, is a horrible orgy of mongrel Elizabethan and incoherent Renaissance; in Germany originality suffered delirium tremens in the suburbs of Munich, where one could see plump and peaceful German families taking their coffee in Chinese-pagoda villas. Then came America and ferro-concrete. America discovered the natural use of the new material, and she discovered height. Americans have often told me that I



am wrong ; they argue that the origin of the skyscraper is to be found in the small size of Manhattan and the cost of land. That is not true, for the skyscraper is not confined to Manhattan. You find it in Boston, Chicago, even in Oklahoma, where land was not worth a nickel a foot. The truth is that American architects, who went for their training to Paris, had the fit of exaltation which in other times produced the great styles. That is how they made the style of the present, and it is magnificent. Some of the tall buildings are bad, some good. The architect has not everywhere equalled his dream, but in general he has all the time kept a firm hold on utility, the only safe companion for the man who builds. He has wasted no time and no money on the scrolls and garlands which disfigure English building ; he has not broken up his noble columns with irrelevant stone cubes. He has used no columns at all except to support something. So far as possible (that is, after compromising with the demand for plate-glass ground floors), he has made honest use of his material. And so, by long lines, by avoiding fret, he has produced nobility. The Woolworth, the Wurlitzer, its neighbour the Bush Terminal—all these, though rather elaborate, are clean-lined and good. Lit up at night, the Bush Terminal is a fairy castle in the air. The Commodore Hotel is perhaps the most magnificent of all because it is less narrow, has more dignity, and because its use of two materials is light and gay.

You find them all over the town, these landmarks

of the new builders. Sometimes, as in the case of the Flatiron, the failure is horrible. At other times the result is dull, but in the main they make New York into a city of columns which support the sky. They mean something in terms of aspiration. It is not business alone which piles brick upon brick so fast opposite my window that every week a complete floor is built. Business thinks that it hires the architect, just as it thinks that it tolerates the poet, but the architect and the poet know better. In matters of art they always come through. The business men are too busy to watch over their own version of beauty; so the artist comes in and imposes his own.

Height is the new destination of American architecture. Even in the distant suburbs of Manhattan—at High Bridge, for instance—the twelve-floor building is there, and the cottage is not. The centre of old respectable Manhattan can still be seen in Murray Hill, in Madison Avenue, but here, too, height will ultimately prevail. You are very conscious of this tendency in the Mayfair of Manhattan, round about East Sixtieth Street. The private houses are opulent, but their style is fretful and inferior to that of the office buildings. You can see that here money has toyed at leisure instead of wearying of design, as it has in Wall Street, and giving over the work to the architect. Here are marble medallions, unnecessary pillars, slim, wrought-iron gates. You can imagine the rich woman who hunted the architect; you guess the husband away from home, indulging in frenzied finance. This feeling is

continued in a less emphatic way in the district of Murray Hill, where the old predominates for a while.

In general, the private house is excessive in design. Here and there a white-stone face shines fine and pure, but few private buildings in New York are equal to the big apartment houses, such as those of Park Avenue and Madison Avenue, which are square and logical. The American builds best when he builds high, but he must go all the way. His occasional failures appear in the houses of four or five floors. The effect is not narrow enough for him. Height and narrowness are essential to his young genius. It is curious to see the new products by the side of the old brick houses, coloured with terra cotta, which, once upon a time, the rich people from downtown built near Thirty-fifth Street, to escape Manhattan. But Manhattan got them all the same.

I wonder what would have happened to Manhattan if the building law had not interfered; a time would have come when from the Battery to Forty-fifth Street the whole of the island would have been covered with thirty-story buildings. The lower floors would never have seen the sun, and great hurricanes would have blown from the East River to the Hudson through the devil's corridors. It would have been epic. Now the buildings are set back in their upper floors; it is still fine, because it is big, but it is losing the nobility of the sheer façade. The new laws have saved Old New York for better or for worse. Probably for worse, as Old New York is an empty thing and the shade of

Peter Stuyvesant a ghost out of place. But no doubt the old houses on West Twenty-third Street, near the ferry, the dignity of Murray Hill, and the disdain of Washington Square sniffing at Greenwich Village, will for a while be maintained. The little dancing places off Broadway, the few places where one may meet some mild-looking "toughs," will also long stand out against the vast and respectable pleasure halls of the democracy.

I have wandered a great deal about New York. A city which had not its cosmopolitan population, and therefore its variety of impression, would be wearisome because the streets are so much alike, except a few of the main streets. You can always recognize Broadway, pursuing commerce and pleasure; Fifth Avenue, opulent and a little superior, just as you know where you are in St. Mark's Place, by the aristocratic old church; again in the pleasant, economical Bronx, in tumultuous Wall Street, you know where you are. But the difference between, shall we say, East Forty-sixth and East Forty-seventh is nothing. No unexpected angles, no London oddities of palace and hovel fix your eye. Differences of wealth alone make a difference of impression, and these grade down so slowly, particularly in the eastern side of town, that the change of feeling is infinitesimal.

To perceive a strong impression in New York you must go to Greenwich Village or to the East Side. I did not go very much into Greenwich Village. I felt that it would be too similar in spirit to our English

Chelsea. I was afraid to meet painters and writers, because all over the world they exhibit much the same vices, virtues, and views. They are international before they are national. The stockbroker is more significant. Still, I have known the admirable cooking of "The Good Intent," come within the radius of the Province-town Players, consumed coffee and ideas under the sinister glow of revolutionary candles in a room that had never been cleaned. Amusing. Amusing rather like the "Petit Trianon," where Marie Antoinette milked the cows and made butter. In Greenwich Village the decoration of art was too heavy for the art; I felt that what I saw there I did not really see, and that the real work was being done quietly elsewhere.

It is very different on the East Side. The thing that strikes the foreigner first is that the New York poor live in houses externally of the same type as those of the middle class, the same height, same balconies. Only the decoration of washing that hangs out to dry, the crowding children on the street and the fury of activity revealed by the shops located in cellars, by degrees impose themselves, also the great number of fruit and vegetable stalls in the side streets. It sorts itself out by and by. One observes that among the twenty or thirty children on the doorsteps appears a variety of national types; one notices the mothers shawled and seated on those steps, talking, sewing, or watching without excitement the rows of babies in their little carriages. One sees that here are no big



stores, because there are no big purses, and one is tempted to say that these tall tenements are not so gloomy as the low black houses of the London East End. The children make an impression of prosperity because they are, on the whole, infinitely better kept and some of them better fed than the children of the English poor.

The East Side carries itself off by a touch of the picturesque. Its division into national streets encourages the stranger. He is surprised to find a Greek street, a Spanish street, a great block of Italian streets, but he is disappointed in Chinatown. Oh, what a come-down after the lyrical stories of the magazines! This little cluster about Doyer Street, Pell and Mott Streets, at the end of the Bowery; just a few signs in Chinese, a little pottery, some lychee, the Chinese Joss House, that is all. It is mercantile instead of being sinister. The opium den has removed uptown, and naught remains of the East save here and there a Chinese child, comic and touching in mauve flannel trousers. One does not feel the poverty of the East Side, till at last one enters the tenements. Here, indeed, New York is not outdistanced by London itself. They are horrible. Originally built for one family, the New York tenement now houses a dozen in a room; sexes herded together among the cooking, the laundry, and presumably ablutions; broken windows, leaky roofs, no plumbing, stairs thick with dirt and vermin. It would be tragic if I did not feel that in this great country that has work enough for all, the East Side is merely

the clearing station of the New World. This man, who lives with two families in a room, is earning only enough to keep alive, but he is refusing himself liquor, movies, tobacco; his wet clothes dry on his body because he will not buy another suit; he is saving. Soon he will get a better job, will save some more, find a partner, set up for himself. He will move to 150th Street or so. He may succeed and, street by street, move downtown until he, or his son—it matters little—enters the charmed circle of Central Park. On the way many must fall, many must die, but very few stay. The East Side is a passage. The poor of America are not like those of Europe, locked into their poverty, whence they cannot escape except by incredible luck or amazing ability. In America, even the poor have a chance with the future. They come, speaking strange tongues, without linen, sometimes without friends, but there is nothing that prevents them, no national bar, no class bar, from retaining the faculty by which man lives, which is hope. In America every man may rise. It is not an idle dream for an East Side child to tell himself that he will become one of the masters of America. It may not be a lofty dream; it means greed and grab, but it is a dream, and dreams are the stuff that worlds are made of.

You can see them everywhere, fleeting in their large automobiles, and stopping from time to time to spend some money at an hotel, a shop. In New York they oppress you less than they do in London, because in America so many own automobiles. People

mortgage their houses to buy automobiles. So it is not locomotion only indicates wealth, in a country where automobiles belong to a class which in Europe could not afford to ride in a taxi. Nor is it clothes. The man who has made his money in the West or the Southwest does not, when he appears in the lounge of a large hotel, make the effect, half smart, half vulgar, of the European *nouveau riche*. He buys his clothes in the town where he made his money; he breaks out now and then only through a diamond ring, bought in a fit of desire, and worn on a short, heavy finger. Also he dislikes dressing for dinner. It worries him. He would like to take his coat off, but his wife won't let him; on the other hand, he wishes that she would not take *her* clothes off, but he can't stop her. A common sight in the very expensive places of New York is a youngish, rough-looking man in a day suit, dining with a wife dressed in the Rue de la Paix, in clothes to which, sometimes, she adds the trimmings of Tipkinville.

I remember such a couple. It was very late, at a show after the theatre. I could see in the glow of his eyes, hear in the echo of his laugh, that he liked being up so late—so different from the night life of Tipkinville! As he could buy nothing to drink, he was having an enormous lot to eat. The *pâté de foie gras* had been detained on the table, to keep ultimate company with one of those interesting sweets made out of an ice wrapped up in a hot omelet, which latter is inclosed in another ice, the result, I believe, in another omelet, and so on. I think he had ordered a cigar, and kept the

box. I was a little sorry for him; how happy he would have been if he had been a ruminant with four digestive mechanisms instead of one. He lay back in his chair, extended thumbs in waistcoat holes; his intelligent brown eye inspected the room, as if he were valuing it. He was at ease. He was not afraid, as are the European *nouveaux riches*, of lacking good form. He was It. From time to time he glanced contentedly at his pleasant, healthy wife, who looked like an enormous rose trying to escape from a narrow green vase. She was not so comfortable. (Perhaps the green vase was tight.) She was peering through a gold lorgnette studded with diamonds. She was looking round for somebody she knew, and she did not know anybody—yet. But as I observed them, so self-assured, I understood that they would know everybody—soon. They would take a house somewhere near East Seventieth Street; buy the tapestry ex-kings have to sell, a rock-crystal bath, and one of the beds Queen Elizabeth slept in. She would ride in Central Park, or wherever the quality rides. He would learn golf from this year's champion. They would buy a larger car. They would join a country club, and there make themselves popular by taking down to the members cases of whisky. She would buy at sight in Fifth Avenue, having learned that she could not buy in Broadway. He would be annoyed by not being admitted to an exclusive club, and henceforth respect only that one. He would do his work uncomfortably in New York, and from time to time dash down to Tipkinville, ostensibly to look after



things, in reality for refreshment. She would accompany him only for a few days, in the fall and the spring, after her new frocks arrived. She would not need refreshment, for she would be quaffing the wine of life—lunch parties, tea parties, private performances by Slovak violinists; Brazilian dancers and English lecturers would lead her to dress for lunch, dress for tea, dress for dinner; to pass from the midday band, inspired by Irving Berlin, and delightful, to the orchestra of the afternoon, inspired by Vincent d'Indy or Debussy, and praiseworthy, to the dinner band and more Irving Berlin, to the theatre and fragments of "La Bohème," to supper and more Irving Berlin, to the midnight revel under the ægis of Mr. Ziegfeld, and, lest the dawn should catch her idle, to the dancing club, where, a little tired, but having his money's worth, the master of America (but not of his wife) would for a long time listen to Ruthenian-American music, and watch her, a little disquieted, revolving in the arms of a handsome young fellow with waxed hair. Then bed, perhaps to sleep, perchance to dream of the day, hurrying, similar to the last, upon the heels of the dying day.

In other words, what Zola used to call "*La Curée*," of which there is no exact translation, except perhaps "pigs in clover." Only they are not pigs, but rather imitative sheep, full of desire, and lost in fields where grow strange grasses.

This is the tragic side of the magnificent American desire, of the splendid American life force, which so



swiftly has enslaved nature and raised a broad pasturage which no Attila can trample. And yet, in the middle of all this folly, America's energy and intelligence survive. The man is still keen, the woman is still austere; they do not decay, but are only spectators in a play where they fancy they have a part.

They do represent the triumph of the American mechanical civilization. You see that in their homes. One I have in mind is amazing. Imagine tall iron gates opened by flunkies uniformed in gold, whose business in life is to touch a button when the automobile of the master comes into sight. In response to that button, in the dim distance of the expensive house, a bath begins to run; whisky and soda is set out; in the park in the courtyard the uniformed officials collect the children from the private swimming bath and the private "gym." The apartments are fairly large, ranging from a dozen to thirty rooms. You can have an address there for twenty thousand dollars a year, though at that price you cannot expect to be really comfortable.

I am not laughing at this luxury, exactly; it is merely the extremity of the American character. The American is not understood in Europe, where they call him a dollar grabber. So he is, but he is seldom mean, never avaricious; he is also a dollar waster. He saves only when he needs capital to start in business. When he makes money he wants the fullness of life according to his particular lights, and one of his joys is immense hospitality. I have met many a hard American, but

not one mean one ; he is capable of fine gestures as he handles his wealth. In the main he devotes it to what one may call the mechanical civilization.

There is no place in America where one obtains a fuller feeling of material aspiration than at the barber's. In Europe we get our hair cut ; in America we linger for a moment on the threshold of the Mohammedan paradise. Here are whiteness, cleanliness, light. Here are thirty assistants in perfect white clothing. Here is asepsis as far as it can go ; germicide soap for the barber's hands ; sterilized brushes for the hair ; sterilized brushes for the face. And after the shave ! Scented ointments from the East ; perfumed waters of recent origin, and the witch-hazel of tradition ; hot cloths and hotter cloths. Forty lotions for the hair ; shampoos soapy, or oily, or alcoholic ; vibrators for face and scalp ; tilting chairs to make a dentist jealous. You are scraped, and massaged, and rubbed, and washed ; you feel smooth like a cat being stroked . . . and, to make complete the sensation of attendance, another hireling shines your boots into mirrors, while a houri holds your hands with rosy fingers and makes yours such as her own. Everything is done that can be done.

It may seem churlish to remark that after all this you generally find that you have been given a bad shave and haircut, price two or three dollars, and that your large tip is received in a silence that means : " So that's the sort of tightwad you are ! We'll remember you."

That is the interesting part of it; the barber does not serve you well; as he works he hums a hymn of hate and ruffs your hair on purpose; he is rude, casual, and incompetent. You go to him for sensual satisfaction, and it is only the American sense of propriety prevents the manicure parlours being inclosed with curtains, as they are in the notoriously licentious British Isles.

This is part of the mechanical civilization, part of the desire to get all one can out of the New World. In a good English hotel you will sometimes find a theatre-ticket office, a library, and even a railway-ticket office. There will be a news stand, a valet, and perhaps a florist; but no English hotel will supply you also with a candy store, a drug store, a notary public, a doctor, a safe deposit, a stockbroker, and an osteopath. An osteopath! Fancy an hotel thinking that there might be something wrong with your bones! In a minor summer hotel in New Hampshire a lady may be waved, which she will fail to achieve in a biggish Scotch resort. The psychological implication of this profuseness seems to me double—the American wants to have everything, and he wants it when he wants it. In several hotels in America they have a night shift of stenographers. You can get out of bed at three in the morning; a cool, tidy girl will then take down your letters. You will say, "Who wants to dictate at three in the morning?" Nobody; but, in America, somebody might want to. That is the essence of mechanical civilization, to use everything you have, to reduce labour by machinery and methods; and, by machinery and methods, to increase

the further opportunities for labour. A scientific and productive ring, but it makes one rather giddy. There are amazing instances of its products, such as the typewriter that counts its own words, the machine that sorts index cards according to contents, the autotelewriter, which causes your handwriting to appear in another place while your hand is moving. Witchcraft!

I have enjoyed nothing more in America than the mechanical civilization. One finds it everywhere. One finds a hint of it in the New York advertisements which offer to do your laundry for twelve cents a pound. (Shorten your shirts and keep down your laundry bill!) There is something fresh about that; there is something fresh in all the American devices. . For instance, a shoeblack, after moistening my boots with liquid blacking, dried them with a small electric fan. I don't know that this dries them any quicker or any better than the wind, but I like the mechanical idea. I like, on railway platforms, to see little electric trucks carry the luggage, replacing men who shout and perspire. If this is excess, it is in the right direction—namely, toward the minimization of effort. The United States has done more in this way than all the other countries put together. For instance, the electric iron, price eight dollars or so, which is fitted to a light plug and enables the housewife to save its cost in a month by doing her own ironing. It also enables the poor girl, who has only one good skirt and two decent blouses, to remain smart. The iron is part of the American home, where I find other wonders—the linen chute, which



saves the handling of linen and precipitates it into the linen room ; the electric washer, that big drum in which you can leave your linen to swirl among soapsuds and think no more about it ; the electric wringer, which saves you the trouble of squeezing the wet linen, and which is so delicate that you can entrust even lace to it. This civilization is extraordinary, and takes extraordinary forms, such as the electric curling iron ; the immersion heater, which enables you to warm your coffee when you have no coffee pot, by dipping a stick of metal direct into the fluid ; and even the safety comforter, which you can connect with a plug and lay upon any part of yourself which aches. Everything has been thought of. More people, in America, are thinking of how to make life easy than anywhere else. They will cut you a door key while you wait, just as they will build a floor of your office in a week ; they will save your running downstairs, or taking the elevator, by providing a Cutler chute to mail your letters at your bedroom door. They will protect your shirts at the laundry by inserting boards and clips, and they will save you brown-paper parcels by providing laundry bags. They are always thinking of these things. For instance, when an American sells you an eye lotion or a bottle of fountain-pen ink, somebody has thought of the use of these liquids, and, instead of making you buy a special instrument, or letting you forget it, has fixed a dropper to the cork. It looks like nothing, but it means easier living. Also it means saving labour. The plate washer, the rack sunken into



soapsuds whirled electrically, is a clever machine. But what strikes one is that the water is so hot that nobody need wipe the plates. They dry of themselves. The potato peeler, which rotates the vegetables on corundum powder and scrapes them clean, is a clever machine. But no one need clean the peel out; a stream of water carries it away. The whole idea of American business seems to be to save labour, which is expensive, and to substitute the cheap machine.

I must note that America wastes paper and cardboard in the most extraordinary way. Any American newspaper would make twelve English ones, while the laundry board, the paper cups for ice water, all this is drawing on the raw materials of the earth. But America owns so much of the raw materials, and gets electricity for nothing. It is no wonder that she should substitute the machine for the human being. In spite of immigration America has never had too much human labour to spare. In the home, notably, labour is scarce; indeed, the servant problem is one of the first things which impresses the European. It is a peculiar problem, for there are servants in America, but they are in a queer state of mind. The men are pretty fair, but the white women are intolerable. They are inefficient, unwilling, dirty workers, generally rude, and seem to suffer under a sense of intolerable grievance because they are servants. They seem to think that to serve is to lose caste, which is to a certain extent true; in a family where one girl becomes a housemaid, and another a shopgirl, the shopgirl thinks more of herself,

and makes her sister feel it. But what I cannot understand is that in a country where the opportunities for women are good, anybody should become a servant if he or she feels so violently against it. And they do feel violently against it. So much so that you seldom find a young housemaid; as a rule she is elderly, and is presumably a woman who has failed. Young ones are met mainly in hotels, because the tips are high. The waiters are just as bad. I like everybody in America except the barbers and the waiters. In these America possesses a class of whom it cannot be said that they also serve; they merely stand and wait.

All this points to suppressed furies. The resources of America are so vast, the exhibition of wealth is so intense, that those who are not rich seem burned up in a furnace of hatred and envy. All service, all subordination, revolts the American; the evidence of this is found in the prices paid for domestic labour. The European is amazed to find domestic servants paid sixty to eighty dollars a month, and unobtainable at that; to hear that a temporary lady's maid is being paid seven dollars a day, plus board and lodging. I do not say that they should not be well paid—indeed, eighty dollars a month is not too much for the servant's convict life—but I do protest against the ill temper with which fair wages are received.

The effects of the servant problem are already felt in the American home. In the old sense, the American home is disappearing and is being converted from a house into a small apartment with a kitchenette, where

the wife does most of the work, assisted once a week by a charwoman who earns three to four dollars a day. I discovered a number of cases which seem strange to an Englishman, among women whose husbands were worth about ten thousand dollars a year. One of them runs a ten-roomed house and four children, and does all the cooking herself, assisted once a week by a charwoman. Another one struck, and went into an hotel, breaking up the home; two others do all the work of four rooms and the cooking. This is an uncomfortable stage in the transition between the old home and the new. My own belief is that the new home will appear in America first. It is already there, in the "efficiency buildings"—one room and a concealed bed, a restaurant below, a common nursery; in other words, everything handed over to the experts. I am wholly for the new type of home, believing it is folly to make every woman into a housekeeper, whether she be fit or not. But I cannot help seeing that the transition stage is having annoying effects.

In America the married woman is enormously overworked. She practically works all the time, and this will have serious effects upon her culture. Before the war the American wife was greatly given to intellectual interests. Nowadays, more and more, the care of the child and the house is driving her back into the housekeeping ranks from which she had escaped. Therefore, this is proving an impediment to marriage. It is becoming more and more an impossible proposition to ask a girl to give up the freedom of paid work to run

a home. It is also a vigorous argument against a high birth rate; and, though I am of those who support birth control, I cannot help seeing that these overworked homes, and these apartment houses, where dogs are disliked and children forbidden, lead to marriages where there are no children at all—namely, to bad marriages. Again, the servant problem compels the husband to take up a portion of the housework, for which he is, as a rule, only more unsuitable than his wife. It depresses him still more than it depresses her. Lastly, it seems to me that, except among the rich, the servant problem is killing entertainment. The American woman is amazing. I have met a number who did all their own work and yet were perfectly waved and manicured, but it was not difficult to discern the nervous tension of the hostess as she watched her guests. I have seen one of them, with agony in her eyes, as she wondered how the hired porter was dishing up the food she had cooked. The American housewife is clever. In America people cook food, while in England they cremate it; but what effort! what worry! what an oath those women must register that such a party shall never happen again! So, the mechanical civilization is not wholly creative; it is also remedial. If the Middle West uses agricultural machines instead of men, if the home is principally electric, it is because mankind is refusing any longer to be subject to mankind. That is good, but for the moment it is most uncomfortable. You will say that all this is very class-conscious, and that I am making a fuss about well-to-do



women who have to work (serve them jolly well right!), while millions of American women have never had a servant at all. Well, I am not generally called a reactionary, and I am looking forward to mechanical homes for the poor also, who should not be so poor, who, too, should benefit from the mechanical civilization and from the expert. I want liberty and rest for the working woman, who to-day stands in the social system as if seized by an octopus; but I am not going to pretend that I view without anxiety the struggle for the survival of the classes which have attained a level of culture and elegance that must serve as a standard for the rising masses.

It is late already, and it might be early still, so slightly has the day begun, such is the peace of this little town in Alabama. Above my head the sky is dimmed by a haze of heat. An idle wind stirs the dust into reluctant motion, then subsides. There is silence in the township, where only a stray dog wanders, seeking diversion or provender. It is Sunday morning, and no bells ring. I go along the irregular streets over the old cobbles outlined with grass. Sitting in their porches, large and content, are a few coloured women, hands folded; the man of the house, for some reason not at church, stares meditatively at the hedge tangled with convolvulus. From a distant garden I hear the chorus of a song. It comes, borne upon the slight wind, "Fo' de glory ob de Lord." This is the South. I have passed through the softly moulded hills of



Tennessee, seen the cotton burst its pods; all was ease and peace. Here, no more the rude comfort of the West, nor the glitter of New York, but a casual contentment which either fails to secure material goods or transcends them. I have a sense of cheerful poverty. Here one does not care. One keeps one's spirit calm and one's manners equal. Grace and weariness inform the voices of the women.

I go along the tree-lined streets, which at a point cease to suggest the city, but mute themselves into country lanes; past a few surviving houses of the Colonial days, low, white, and matured by neglect as well as time, until I reach the cabins of the negroes, where they live narrowly but gaily, cooking unexpected things and discarding temporary griefs.

Time passes. It is noon. In the main street the trolley cars establish fictitious activity.

It is the afternoon, and the heat falls more heavily. Nearly all have fled the streets; they are hidden from the sun which strikes now with shafts of molten brass from the purple vault of the sky.

A little coolness falls as the shadows lengthen. Near the soda fountains and news stands reviving youth seems to plot mild movement. The day begins to wane as a hesitation overwhelms the sunset glow; a greyness gains and makes night.

It is night now along the ragged hedges of the little Southern city. A blunted moon slowly passes from the colour of a rose leaf to that of burnished copper. The tall woods of thin trees are spattered

with the widowhood of the Michaelmas daisies and the scarlet patches of iris. The breeze is heavy in the thick leaves. The chorus of the locusts arises, that is like a breath through a split bamboo, blending with the broken carol of the cricket. All is soft and leisurely; upon a doubtful altar uncynical content is good-humouredly offered up "Fo' de glory ob de Lord."

I love the South. I like the beat of life below Mason and Dixon's line. I like the negligent trot of the horses that no one hurries. Above all, I like the grace of intercourse with this people of a civilization older, in a sense, than that of England, because they were cut off and so have preserved much that England has lost. The haste of London has not seized them, and yet they have resisted the dullness which befell the market towns of Kent. I like their voices; their words are gentle and vain; they do not question, nor comment; they respect your privacy, or, which is as good, do not care what hides within your privacy. A little languid, easily gay, never intrusive. They are the eternal aristocrats, whose strain from time to time blends with a coarser one, sometimes overwhelms it. Something of this hangs even about busy, industrial Atlanta or Birmingham. In despite of the growing commerce of the South, it accompanies one through Mississippi to New Orleans, and I perceived live memories of the Confederacy even in Texas.

That which applies to the true South also reigns farther north, in Kansas, in little Evansville, warm, leisurely, and most charming. I found it in Washing-

ton. Glowing Washington, near as it may be to the Line, is a Southern city. Indeed, to me, all of the country from Florida to Yonkers is the South rather than the East. New York itself is not a Northern city. It has not the hardness, and does not seem to suffer from the moral impulses which begin in Connecticut. It is gay and Oriental. Are not the South and the East everywhere much the same?

I cannot believe that one can dislike Washington. To walk about the city is a continual pleasure, for it is a city in a park. Its broad streets lined with trees, the massive whiteness of its government offices, nothing of this is wealthy, but all of it is solid. It has an air of business, and when we remember that the business of Washington is government, we understand that this business need not be very active. As at night you go to the Point, or stare into the deep sky shot with the weird greenish lights of the printing works that reflect into the Potomac, you discover always this Southern peace, this soft protest against haste and acquisitive desire. And in Washington, for the first time in my life, in a misty garden I saw fireflies.

That is the exterior, so pleasant, so sweet. And yet, as the European touches the South, he grows conscious that all is not so easy as it seems. In the Jim Crow states he discovers with a shock of surprise that special coaches on the railroads are reserved for the coloured people, that they occupy only the three rear seats in street cars, and that in public places special waiting rooms are allocated to them. It gives him a

shock if he comes from the North, where he has seen the negroes freely mixing with the whites, except in the restaurants. He receives a greater shock when he discovers that in America once black is always black, and that a remote drop of African blood running through a white vein can nullify intellectual attainment and public esteem.

It is very difficult for a European to understand the colour problem; if he is not free-minded, he easily makes a mistake. I did not come to America with the traditional prejudices of the sentimental English, many of whom like to talk of the negro as a man and a brother. It is very easy to take up that attitude when you are English and never see a negro except in a music hall. It is quite another matter to maintain the same point of view when you live in a town where the black outnumber the white. This need not change your feelings as regards the coloured man himself, but it must change your point of view in regard to the social problem he represents.

I mean by this that one's personal liking or dislike of the coloured man need not influence one's attitude to the problem of the race. For my part, who during these months have spoken a good deal with negroes, I like them very much. Above all, I like their almost unfailing cheerfulness, the beautiful smile with which they greet the slightest courtesy or consideration. There is a jolly humanity about the coloured man. When he serves you he does more than that; he takes care of you. He is sensuous and fatherly; he likes



life, and wants you to like it, too. His taste for colours, his fondness of music, the lovely gurgle of laughter which you can draw from him with a slight pleasantry, all this appeals. There is something young in the coloured race, and perhaps it is that which attracts. He does not seem to worry over social standing, material success, or career; he seems content, as Mr. Henry James would have said, "beautifully to be," to do his work, to marry some girl with a large, white smile, and teach his piccaninnies how to sing, "Joshua fit the battle of Jericho." Sometimes the innocence of the coloured race produces delicious burlesque. Once, in a conversation with an enormous friendly fellow, who was minding a motor car which had broken down, and which he was trying to repair with unexpected tools, such as a corkscrew and a buttonhook, we came to talk politics. From interior we passed to international, and with immense seriousness he said to me, "Sir, can you indicate to me the concomitant circumstances which have caused the international difficulties in the circumference of Poland?" His eyes shone in their large whites; he looked solemn and proud as the long, round words came off his tongue, as if he took an almost sensual pleasure in their weight, if not in their meaning. I think that there I glimpsed half the charm of the coloured race—its capacity to find a toy, whether banjo or verbosity.

Of course there is another side. I have two memories of that other side, which is going to mean something in American policy. One of these was a



full-blooded young negro, who was finishing his first year in a Northern university, and who in another three years would be a lawyer. He would follow his father in the same profession; he was keen-minded, and, even in conversation, sufficiently oratorical to assure me that he would make a fine pleader. He was to practice in New Jersey, where he would be briefed by men of his own race and by white men in native cases. He rather defined the problem to me without saying a word about it. Here was the African entering one of the chief professions of the white man, and entering it in spite of his colour . . . to do what? to be what? Always to be different; always apart, of the same class, not of the same kind.

But the other memory is sharper, because it is more eloquent and contained in five sentences: I was watching the people who passed in the street, from a window where I sat with a negro preacher. He was concerned with his race, and so I could talk to him freely about the negro problem. After a while there passed, quite close to us, a girl who was probably a quadroon, rather pretty, not very dark. I had been talking of what was described to me as "the black peril." Suddenly the preacher pointed to the girl and said: "Whose daughter is that, do you think? Do you think her male ancestors were black or white? Be sure that that child comes from a stock where the women were black and the men white. People talk to you of the black peril. I say to you, what of the white peril?"

I did not answer him. What do I know of these

things? All I am doing, in America, is to try to understand, and when on one side I find a white man laying down that as a social being the negro does not exist, when, on the other hand, I find a negro, here and there, burning with anger over social wrongs, all I can conclude as a free-minded man is that here lies one of the most serious problems of the American community. America has two colour questions—the negro and the Japanese—and it is all very well for the European to lay down what America ought to do or not to do about it; the European lives in another continent and has not those problems on his doorstep. There is a feeling in America that the coloured element is politically a bad element; that it is ignorant, and generally corrupt. I do not suppose that this can be proved, because one never can prove that against thirteen millions of people, but the result of the attitude is that a question which cannot be handled constitutionally has to be handled irregularly. Fearing the black vote, or intimately objecting to its being cast at all, it is quite clear that irregular methods are being used to prevent the negro from exercising the franchise. In *The Nation* of the 6th of October, 1920, we find an extraordinary array of facts as to the treatment of black women voters, when they appeared to register. It seems that supplements were found to the ordinary legal device intended to deprive negroes of their vote, which consists in compelling them to show that their grandfather could read. (This means disfranchisement, as the grandfather was a slave.) *The Nation* states that the law

was stretched to keep the black women off the register ; that difficult legal questions were put to them ; that they were asked, "What is a mandamus?" That they were refused registration for failing to answer questions on state finance, and even disfranchised for mispronouncing the word "municipal." We know also that lynching is still considerably practised, not only for sex crimes, but for theft, and even for lesser reasons. We have read in the report of the sub-committee of the Republican National Committee on Policy and Platform that in 1919 seventy-seven negroes were lynched, as against only four whites and two Mexicans ; that among the coloured people lynched one was a woman, and that eleven were burned alive.

We see all that, and if we are not free-minded we dismiss the situation by saying that the Americans are dealing unjustly with a people who, after all, represent the fruits of American sin—namely, the results of slavery, just as Ireland is the fruit of English sin ; a people who are not responsible for their presence in the United States. . . . Only they *are* present in the United States, and theoretical humanitarianism can do nothing to remove what is a real difficulty. It is no use suggesting all sorts of legal measures if they are repulsive to public opinion. To-day American public opinion is not going to tolerate the idea of conjugal, or even social, relations between black men and white women. It is not going to tolerate social intercourse in public places of refreshment and amusement. It considers that the man of colour is inferior

and must so stay. There are many reasons why this point of view should be held, and the European who does not sympathize with it is an ostrich.

Which does not mean that this point of view can be maintained without friction. So long as the negro was either a slave or a man of very low earning power, he did not make a difficulty. But if we consider that, since the Civil War, the houses in possession of the negroes have passed from twelve thousand to six hundred thousand; the wealth they own, from twenty million dollars to eleven hundred million dollars; that in those days only 10 per cent could read and write, whereas now 80 per cent can do so; that negroes now operate insurance companies with assets of three and a half millions, controlling sixty million dollars of policies; that there are seventy-two negro banks—one realizes that here is a movement made infinitely more serious by material wealth and educational power.

For the movement is not going to stop. The negro is acquiring pride. Whereas in the old days white blood was admired and a quadroon given the front pew in church, now coloured opinion turns against the girl who consorts with a white man. The negro may be kept back publicly, but he cannot be kept back financially and commercially, because business knows no colours. While it is true that the coloured population does not increase very fast, because its heavy birth rate is balanced by a heavy death rate, particularly among half-breeds, it does increase. What is more serious is that its wealth per



head increases still more than the heads themselves. Within fifty years America may have to count with a solid block of twenty-five million people, a great number of whom will belong to the bourgeoisie, and a few of whom will be millionaires. I have put this point to several Americans, and they have invariably answered: "It won't matter a bit; we don't care whether the negro is rich or poor. He's just a nigger. If he becomes a millionaire, he won't find anything to spend his money on." Which is all very well, but the people who so lightly wave away the question are overlooking the intense commercial competition which prevails in America, the fierce struggle for money at any cost, on any terms. Are we really to believe that when the coloured race possesses a large buying power, the white *entrepreneur* will indefinitely refuse all this good money which wants to get into the theatres, into the restaurants, and even into the social life? In one of his lighter sketches, Thackeray tells a story of a footman who made a fortune by speculating in railway stock. He announced this to the baronet, his master, when giving notice . . . and Sir Thomas, perceiving that the money had bridged the social gulf, promptly shook James by the hand and said he would be glad of his acquaintance. Is it not possible that when the negro comes into the fullness of his power and his wealth there will be white people ready to kowtow to him because he is rich? just as to-day they kowtow to other white men, overlook their extraction, if they happen to be rich. If they do, social life will



grow immensely complicated. Collisions and race feeling are quite intense enough when the negro is poor; they will become violent when he is rich.

The solution of this problem is a matter for Americans, just as is the Japanese problem. Americans are perfectly entitled to refuse to admit the Japanese, and to treat their coloured fellow citizens as directed by the majority. An Englishman is quite as entitled to have an *opinion* on this subject as an American to have one on the Irish problem; but an English *solution* of the problem is an impertinence; so I will merely suggest the three ways out which have been put to me by American citizens. One of them is a St. Bartholomew's Day. The second is complete social acceptance. The third is the creation of a free black republic in an African settlement.

St. Bartholomew's Day is, of course, absurd because it is impracticable; modern sentiment makes such a suggestion into a sinister joke. Social equality might come about in the course of centuries, but it is at present hardly conceivable that the prejudice will go down. As for the new negro republic, we have the experience of Liberia as a warning. Unless the American government is prepared to purchase a very large area, and to spend hundreds of millions in converting it into a modern country, the negroes would refuse to emigrate. Still, this sounds the most sensible of the three solutions, though it is a question whether America could do without her coloured labour, which is becoming more and more skilled, and is fairly easily managed.

I repeat that it would be an impertinence on my part to suggest to the Americans what they should do in this difficulty ; but it is within my province to take note of the difficulty and to suggest to my hosts that here is a social problem so grave that, if it is not taken in hand in a purposeful manner, it will in time produce disturbances, material damage, and even bloodshed.

It seems far away, this social question, as I go along the sleepy streets of the little city in Alabama. Here there is no problem, but only peace and a certain satisfaction. In the words of Mrs. Humphry Ward, life is here "a pleasant promenade between two eternities." But then, there is never much noise while the clouds gather for a storm.

## VI ON THE ROAD TO CANAAN

### I

AN Englishman setting out for the Far West carries in his baggage a certain load of preconceptions. He has read a work of Mr. Zane Grey, and seen a few Broadwest films. He has a vision of bronzed men clad in hairy trousers, wearing sombreros, who ride about madly in all directions, and readily draw bowie-knife and six-shooter for the sake of the pure, pure heroine, or the little child with the golden, golden hair, that has wandered into the camp, shack, adobe hut, ranch, as the case may be. It is a highly coloured dream, which the journey confirms only in part. At last, in a sudden burst of sunshine, he comes upon Canaan, upon California.

One trouble is that the man from Europe continually thinks that at last he is reaching the West, only to discover that this is not yet the West, that it lies yet another thousand miles beyond his eyes. I remember my impression as I reached Nebraska, as I began to see cattle and horses being driven along the roads. Such a sight, so different from that of Chicago and its

eastern hinterland, suggested that this must be the West. But it wasn't. It was only the Middle West. Not the magnificent Middle West of Chicago, of my beloved Chicago, fumous, flame-spattered, roaring through her own streets, wild with physical energy, Chicago, the broncho city. It was another Middle West, scrubby, dingy, barely begun, and lacking in promise. It was not the West. When we reached Lincoln, a dusty city grown like a sickly mushroom in the light, my wife began a speculation that amused us all the way: what can a bride feel when she is brought here from the East? to these sketched-out roads, to this cluster of gasometers, oil pumping stations, and smoke-stacks? She must feel wretched. Here was a place where there was nothing to do except work: to a European this is a horrible idea.

So it was not until my awaking eyes peered under the blind of my sleeping berth that I discovered myself in another West, perhaps the real West this time, Colorado. I had gone to sleep on the prairie; I awoke in a fantastic land of mountain and stream; of nature formidable and still untamed, in the midst of a loneliness that would have felt savage if the sunshine had not irradiated the hills with purple, puce, and striating emerald. I am sorry to think that I shall not again receive the shock which I then experienced. Descriptions of scenery are poor things; an hour in the coach will beat the songs which all the poets of all the ages have sung to nature. It is for my own pleasure rather than for that of the reader that I think again

of the Royal Gorge, between its towering rocks splashed with mauve and gold, of the tumbling torrent that goes, furious and fast, down from Canon City. A chapelet of tunnels, a bridge perilously suspended upon two clefts in the rock, now wooded heights, then again the bitter land of rock. It goes on all day as we climb and climb towards the Tennessee Pass, higher into the snow upon which the setting sun now throws the sheen of old copper pots.

This is the West at last. The real West. First of all I miss the ever-present automobile of the East; here and there, along the trails go men on horseback, rough-looking men, who sit their horses differently from the way in which they are sat in Central Park. It is the West because here the few settlements which hide in the valleys strike one always as unfinished. Here are wooden shacks: it is quicker to build of lumber than of stone, and there are no bricklayers in this land. Everything is improvised. Here are hedges made partly of wire, partly of hurdles, partly of sticks tangled with brushwood. Here, too, the yards of houses are choked with rubbish thrown aside while the pioneer gets on with a more urgent job, or which he leaves behind as he goes Westward upon the trail. Here also cattle rather than ploughed fields, cattle in herds which astonish the Eastern eye. This is still a pastoral land at a stage earlier than cultivation; I think of the ancient Hebrews tending their flocks before they entered Canaan. Here they tend flocks. So it is not yet Canaan. I am very far from the



Atlantic, but perhaps I have not reached the West. A few cultivated fields are separated by a wire fence from land untouched since it was parted from the waters, untamed land, most of it, which still casts its tares among the pioneer wheat, land which doesn't want to give in, which by rock and drought, flood, dust, insect and pestilence, is doing its best to defeat man. Man looks very small in Colorado, little David contesting against a Goliath of stone.

Once again we play the bride game. What would she feel in Colorado, this young lady from Manhattan? She would feel very lonely; she would miss the movies and the drug store, but my wife considers that something fine and bracing would fall from these towering cliffs. Here everything is alive: men are making trails through the woods; they are laying new railroads; we encounter a large coach which carries and houses the pioneers of the track: women and children have somehow occurred in the travelling camp. Here are no bungalows, but log huts fit to breed a Lincoln. But man prevails, for here are small cornfields and even orchards. Everything is beginning; here is being done what thirty years ago was being done a thousand miles East.

One can count the cost, as one goes, of this immense energy, of this hopefulness, of this vast desire to conquer which defeats the desire of nature to resist. Upon the prairie we saw a deserted churchyard. For some time, no doubt, a settlement had existed there. The mouldering ruins of shacks still stand. But

nothing is actually left except the churchyard. Behind its broken palings lie the rocks which cover the dead. Already the grasses of the prairie are invading the acre which witnesses that all did not reach Canaan. Among the tombs survives a stooping cross of wood. Soon it will fall, and nature will reabsorb the vanguard of the army which dominated it.

I think of that churchyard lost on the prairie, as a little later I picture the first Westerners coming out of this glowing wilderness into the happy valleys, into the deep arable land of Utah, which was to give birth to Salt Lake City.

## II

It does not last long, the relief of Salt Lake City, its broad streets, the trees and well-laid pavements which surround the Temple. The Westerner who came out here had not gone very far towards the promised land. There was lying before him so much more agony, so much more peril, that one wonders how he passed through the desert, on a march so much longer than forty days in the wilderness. He who has not seen the bitter desert of Utah and Nevada cannot hope to imagine what it cost a man to pioneer. One does not understand at first, as one looks out over this dry country that flies flat, rising towards the horizon to grey hills, splashed with silver, crowned with violet, and in the evening showing crests like

blackened teeth. One does not understand because one does not know how long this will last. It is only by degrees that it strikes me that here grows only a little heather or some ling, bitten grey with frost. It is cold here. Then, a little later, not far from the track, I see twelve dead sheep, frozen stiff in strange attitudes, like wooden toys. They lie under their immense coats; even the sheep freeze, for the desert does not deal with life. Here copper replaced cattle, and all is still, is void. Hardly a bird passes. I think of Sherman's threat to the South: Sherman had to make good his boast that wherever he passed a crow that followed him must carry its own rations. Here in the desert not a crow adventures, but only a beast of prey, speculating upon the rashness of milder life. By degrees one realises that, all the same, here are men, men that dare the threat of emptiness as well as that of activity. For the first time I see prairie schooners, hooded with brown canvas, their heavy horses hoisting the wheels high over the rocks which figure the trail.

But all the same, as one goes on, a strange fascination falls. The air is so bright, the sky so blue, so glowing, as if painted with mineral salts. One hypnotises one's eyes as unrolls before one this endless wild land, these hills patterned into plates like the flanks of a rhinoceros. Sometimes there are no hills, but only on the horizon a faint range which hardly breaks the emptiness of space. This is the West, really the West; the Rockies were well enough, but the European

has his Switzerland. The desert of Nevada, its bleakness, the appearance of the land burnished by the sun, cracked by the frost, nothing of this does he possess. To equal that he must go to Arabia Deserta, to Asia and the desert of Gobi. At night, when the moonlight falls like silver spears upon the mountains that grow blue, he thinks of the mountains of the moon.

Little by little I grow used to the desert. There is so much of it. Still more frozen fields, still more purple hills. I begin to escape it: the telegraph posts help me, for man after all has set his mark even here. Men have come here, men gone through it. And an idea comes to me: what about the women who, following their men, somehow reached California? San Francisco has erected a monument to the pioneer mother, but it seems to me that the Far West is her monument. We do not hear enough about her, but only of the men who did while she endured. I have a vision of that woman as she went through the desert, settling for a short time where there was a spring, a little grass where the cattle might graze, some lumber with which to make a hut. It freezes hard. She is sick; there is no doctor within five hundred miles. Nobody will ride towards her with quinine. She must get over her fever if she can. About her her children, vigorous, sunburnt, happy, but always clamouring that she should cook for them, mend for them, wash them, tell them stories, dry their tears, join in their games. She must teach them, too, for there is no schoolmaster here. They grow up, she thinks, crude and savage,

unlike her playmates in distant Illinois. Her man is happy, successful; she is his lover, his cook, his adviser, his servant.

I met two pioneers in Nevada, and they summed up to-day all that is tragic in the past. The man was about fifty-five, very big, very handsome, in magnificent health. Seldom have I seen a man more vigorous, more willing to laugh, taking his food with greater pleasure. Beside him his wife, probably younger, but so old. Bent by continual scrubbing, having found in the desert no help, no support; too poor in the early days to buy a stove, her new comfort has failed to teach her to desire a vacuum cleaner, a laundering machine; too far from electricity to get help from that; broken by excessive child-bearing; starved of pleasure. She was fifty perhaps, and so old, so thin, her hair so poor, her wretched hands so twisted and blackened about the nails, her clothes, good enough, but shabby because she was shabby, because she had been worn too long, as if the stones had rubbed her freshness off, as if her beauty had been taken by the crackling frost, the devouring sun. It is a good land for men; it makes them big, courageous, enduring. But of women it makes a wreck, the wreck of womanhood, the wreck of beauty and of the graces. It is not only of gravel that paths are made, but of dead skin and powdered bones.



## III

Then, cherry blossom, with an extraordinary effect of suddenness, as if on the stage a back cloth had been dropped before my eyes. After one has unsuspectingly wandered down the Feather River cañon, its precipitous slopes, harsh with stone, clad with pine, one is in Canaan. As I write, this vision of cherry blossom oppresses me after so many days in the wilderness, for it comes without warning. Before me lies a land of soft-swelling hills, clad in pines and firs. No more grey surfaces; now all is green as Ireland. There is an air of kindliness and comfort. No longer does the land roll to an empty horizon into an empty sky. Here are houses, roads, bridges, wired fields: extraordinary! Many dream houses, and, what is significant, they are painted gaily over their plaster, pale pink, wash green; window frames are picked out in blue. It is as if man were attuning himself to the soft sunshine which falls like powdered silver.

I think it was at Oroville that I first felt California. It was enough to see the railroad station built in the Spanish style, with its deep arcade and the hint of a patio behind. It is not often you see a beautiful railroad station, but I suppose that it isn't difficult to be made beautiful when built in a grove of palm trees, by the side of a plot where California, rightly vainglorious and anxious to show herself to the stranger, has planted

orange, lemon and grape fruit trees which carry their fruit in the soft air. Near by acacias are flowering, bending under heavy yellow blooms; from the marsh a stork rises in a leisurely fashion. One has a sense of fatness, of richness, of deep earth, abundant water. Indeed it is Canaan . . . and it is only the native caution of my temperament makes me wonder if there is any meaning in the contrast between the heat of the sun and the cold of the shadow. But, all the same, California overcomes suspicion. She is so bland. She is symbolised just then to me by a geographical accident near Binney Junction, where a range of hills takes upon itself the shape of a sleeping woman, her arms wide apart. Always Nevada said: "Take if you can," while California seems to say: "Take and be welcome."

Then we see a churchyard, a tended, gay, happy, Californian churchyard, with shining white stones and railings fresh painted in green, where birds sing, and where the brilliant sun denies grief. Those dead, unlike those who lie under the ravening grass of the desert, saw Canaan.

## IV

I suppose it is natural enough, though perhaps tedious to the Californian ear, that the foreigner should above all be impressed by the richness of the vegetation of this distant coast. Perhaps the natural beauty

should impress him more, but an almost sensual delight may be found in the thickness of stems, the abundance of leaves, the colour of blooms. I think of the feathery pepper tree, like a gay green peacock, of great heliotropes, puritan in colour, but queerly ardent in a secretive way, of the laburnum that in languor drops its wells of fire, the japonica, so red and saucy, like a flapper with a doubtful present and an undoubted future. Most beautiful of all, the listless eucalyptus, that most negligent of trees, which droops its shiny, fleshy leaves in fragrant weariness. And swollen figs, and oranges that glow, palms from New Zealand or Africa, swollen with sap, shining, outlining themselves out like strips of metal upon the softer sky. Everything is growing. There is in it a continuing excitement. In California life is vivid, in the plants as much as in the beasts. So this obscures the natural beauty upon which I should dwell. It is not so much the spreading Presidio, nor Mount Tamalpais which I see rising above the harbour, nor even the Golden Gate, strangled silver throat of the broad Pacific, that occupies most the eyes that remember. Always it is some glowing fruit, too heavy for the branch that bears it.

Yet all this, the Golden Gate and the ocean, intimately composes San Francisco. I have never known a city more closely conditioned by its site. And I add my opinion to millions of others, that the location of San Francisco is unsurpassed in the world. I wish I could have entered the city from the Pacific,

have seen her hiding behind her hills, while some Japanese steamer threaded its way past the rocks which the seals love, into that winding passage which Don Gaspar de Portola discovered by mistake. It must come upon one with an effect of shock. Well, I had enough of that.

The thing which first impresses in San Francisco is the variety of its architecture. It is not a city built in a hurry on a ready-made Eastern plan, or out of frames. Here the houses arose by degrees and were houses to live in more than houses to sell. Hence individual taste, sometimes fortunate, sometimes not, but always various. The Spanish influence is strong. Everywhere small balconies, from which to drop a rose, deep verandas and short staircases where plants may clamber. It is not a hard city. I am not thinking of attractive suburbs such as St. Francis Wood, or Russian Hill, but of the city itself, with its occasional red brick streets, its constant hills and its equally frequent grass. At first San Francisco irritates the stranger, because the plan is awkward when compared with the rigidities of New York. It was so long since I had seen a street run into another at anything but at right angles that first I lost myself. Thus I found constant irritation, and in my mind even protest against those who built San Francisco. It takes a little time to understand other people's difficulties, to realise that since almost the whole of San Francisco is built on hills, the result of a quadrilateral plan would have been that no horse and hardly a car could have gone

straight up a hill. Incidentally I suspect that bad motorists go to San Francisco when they die, to drive without brakes down hills of  $45^{\circ}$  gradient. The San Franciscans who kindly drove me about their city have no idea of my continual state of terror, as their automobiles casually hurled themselves down streets which in England we would call precipices. I said nothing. I kept the Union Jack flying. But within my heart it wasn't flying: flapping was the most it could do.

San Francisco is one of the nine American cities I want to see again (and never mind which are the other eight). This is not entirely a question of climate, since I remember a March day when a wind blew fit to pierce Harris tweed. Nor is it exactly the architectural appearance, for the fire has made a new San Francisco which does not recall Frank Norris, or the old stories of Chinatown. There is no Chinatown. My greatest disappointment in San Francisco was this highly respectable district of shops and substantial houses, fine goods, well-spoken Orientals. I might have waited days without meeting a tong murderer, and as for the performance to which the tourist automobiles take one, singing children and paper boats, and all that sort of thing, why, you get more Chinatown in just one novel of Mr. Thomas Burke. I came too late. I ought to have arrived when the water still came up to Montgomery. Also, while I am crabbing, let me express my horror of San Francisco's boast that it (with New Orleans) alone possesses a thoroughfare



where run four street-car lines. I can understand San Francisco getting into sackcloth and ashes about it; I can understand her hoping that the stranger doesn't mind running like a rabbit under the roaring wheels, while the traffic policemen scratch themselves behind the ear and do no more, but boast of it! Ye gods!

After Market Street and its four street-car lines it does one good to discover something of the San Francisco that was, that is still, the real San Francisco, the Mission Dolores. To pass under the mild archway of this little fane, after glancing at its frontage, Moorish and Corinthian, helps one to forget much that modernity has spoilt. Here is something real, something permanent, something not quite forgotten. Here indeed America has a long past, and here for a moment hitches her chariot of petrol to the patient mule team of the Spanish fathers. All through California I was haunted by the feeling of the missions, not only Dolores, but the others, San Miguel, San Carlos del Carmelo, so small, so delicately laid of adobe and plaster, so very much there, not stranded and lost in the middle of shunting yards and canning plants. The missions still mean something. They are of the country, like the oranges which ripen in its fields.

As one goes South the feeling of California is enhanced. San Francisco is intensely Californian, but to me California really means battering sun blasts, warmth, and everywhere intense blue, golden, intense, almost African colour. You do not perceive this everywhere, but it filters into the cities. Los Angeles

for instance. One might not think that a big modern city would allow California to penetrate, but California is an atmosphere, as well as a place. One can't keep it out. Here in Los Angeles, in spite of the banks and the big stores, you still find Spain. On Beverley Hills, at Hollywood, here are still the various houses, the verandas, and the jalousies. It is only at Hollywood, perhaps, that you get away for a moment into modern industry, into that strange industry of evolved showmen. At Hollywood everything is temporary, everything seems unfinished, or better still begun. The studios have happened suddenly before the roads were ready for them. Within their confines the grass grows, and from the grass arise the scenes that will soon be filmed. Here I had the good fortune to encounter Mr. Douglas Fairbanks, who was kind enough to show me his studio, the designs of his new film, and, staggering to a European, an almost complete Norman castle which he was building. Here America appears, overlying California, the America which does not hesitate to erect a building some hundreds of feet long, to decorate it with towers sixty feet high, to pull it down to-morrow when its purpose is served. Mr. Fairbanks, I gathered, proposed to dive into the moat from one of those sixty foot towers. Unfortunately the rehearsals had not begun.

And still I go South, until I strike little San Diego, amongs its orange and lemon groves, between plantations of olive trees, thick with silver leaves. Here it is hotter, and the Pacific rolls bluer on the other side

of Coronado. It is real California, casting towards Pacific Beach and Ocean side her hills of blue and rose. Here is a foreign land in its fatness. I meet Mexicans, swarthy and thin. At La Jolla I gaze in a garden at an immense banana tree. Fatness and wealth, warmth, colour, ease. It is California, and one understands this best if one takes a brief excursion into neighbouring Mexico. For a short time the automobile passes through the orange groves, the tended fields. It is still California; you do not notice it. Then you become aware that the land is drying. There are less fields enclosed, but rather thin cattle hang upon the slopes. Suddenly you see a cactus, and then, it is a matter of minutes, you are in a dry aridity, where alone the cactus lives, branching forth spikily. A Mexican wind seizes the dust and blows it in thick veils over your face. Then the border, then Tijuana. Within a few miles of California you are in a dry, wild country, where the houses now are no longer trim, but broken down shacks, where the sidewalks are made of splintered wood, the road of flowing dust, where there is no industry, no cultivation, no hope, no means of living, except the sale of liquor, where bread is earned by those who in the bars put records on the gramophone, by women in crêpe blouses and feathered hats, who, in high-heeled patent-leather shoes, run in the blasting wind that plasters their thin skirts with a film of dust. Poverty, ignominy, wretchedness, Mexico! You understand California now.

## v

Of the Californian himself, and I met him in some numbers, I rather hesitate to speak, because I fear to offend him who has taken so many pains to please me. I must offend him, however, by suggesting that he is not so wholly different from the American as he imagines. I know that everywhere in America difference is cultivated, and nowhere does it seem to me a very vigorous plant. I have been ten months in America, and have always been told that the Southerner is this and that, while on the other hand the Bostonian, but you must remember that a Californian, and all that sort of thing. In fact I have found the Americans amazingly alike from California to Maine, from Minnesota to Texas. They have been alike in their passionate display of hospitality, in their immense American pride, in their desire for culture, in their interest in everything that can possibly interest. Americans identify themselves with one another more than they know, and they do it mainly by their virtues.

All the same, there are certain differences, slight as they may appear. Californian hospitality does seem conditioned by a tendency rather less strong in the East: the parties are more informal. Though, after all, American California is only seventy years old or so, so that "the first white child born in California" may still be alive, and though so many of the cities exhibit



an air of age, it is as if in California something survived of the old days before the railroad came, when hospitality was given to the stranger, not so much as a duty as a matter of course. There is in California a peculiar readiness to take the stranger into the house as he is, to give him what can be found there instead of making for him complicated preparations. There is a certain charm in this, a charm of nature. It gives to entertaining an air of ease.

Ease, that is what I always come back to when I think of California. First it is ease of life in this fertile land; then it is the ease of social relations among people who trouble little about forms; now I find another ease: California shares with the South the honour of not working too hard. One of the few things which have upset me in America is the intensity of labour in the East and the Middle West. I can but admire it, for ambition, physical energy, devotion to the task, those are virtues, but I have always felt myself to be different from people who give themselves so entirely to their work that nothing is left them to enjoy. That is not the case in San Francisco or in any part of California: California has not lost her pleasures. You will imagine that, coming from the Middle West, it was staggering to find all the big stores and many of the small ones closing at half past five. Things get done in California, but they do not, as happens elsewhere, get done a little faster than they need.

So you see the differences are not profound. They are differences of surface, differences of circumstances.



That is all. The Native Sons of the Golden West have taken into their hands a pearl for which they make a setting. But settings take time to forge. There has not yet been time to complete it. There is a Californian type, I suppose, that may combine the energy of the North with the grace of the South. One glimpses it now and then in a Californian girl whose skin, moistened by the Pacific breezes, recalls the English complexion. That is, if she is not too wholly determined to substitute a complexion of another kind. But I cannot perceive the type. There has not yet been time. Too many have come from the East and the Middle West to this small melting pot of the great American cauldron.

## VI

At last I leave California, and once again I understand her better, as if I realized her most in comparison with less fortunate lands. After a few hours the land dries. The oranges and lemons become scarcer, barren fields appear, as the railroad takes me into Arizona towards New Mexico. Here once more a land of crimson sandstone, beautiful and terrifying. A lonely land of sandy desert where nothing grows but stunted palms, fantastic varieties of cactus; here are occasional cattle, mysteriously fed, shacks made of poles and dry palm leaves, about which circulates a small population of brown children, fine men. Here are the women, always

the tragic women, out of whom the desert is being made into civilization. We are far now from the soft breezes of the sea. Here is heat and dust. A hissing wind carries sand and powdered alkali into my eyes. The immense loneliness begins to unroll, the loneliness of gorge and treeless slope, where no birds fly. There is no promised land on the other side of this desert; the promised land lies behind.

## VII

### PARTHIAN SHOTS

IN a way I gained my most vivid impression of America on returning to London. That city made America so remarkable and in some senses so desirable. I saw with a new vision the pageant of London, was struck by its blackness, the low buildings, the deceptively broad streets. The English institutions came up afresh. To stay once more at a real English hotel (I tried three in eight days, and then gave in), to return to these places where one cannot buy a newspaper or cigar, where there is no telephone in your bedroom, or even hot water! That gives one an idea of the state of materialistic barbarism in which England still has her being! And to see with this fatal and, I trust, temporary, new vision, the average English girl, with her clothes straight from the rag bag, and her hair straight from the pillow, to compare her with the thousands of smart little persons, who look as if they were made of enamelled metal, whom you can see any morning coming out of the Grand Central . . . it was rather a shock!

But, on the other hand, to be reabsorbed by the harmonious calm, the ancient poise of a country that finds more contentment in its past than in dreams of the future, to see once more in the eyes of women, after the hard brightness of Broadway, a glow which bespeaks tenderness and illusion, made one feel that America was hectic and excessive. Still, I think I have suggested that before. So it becomes difficult to sum up my emotions before the panorama which is modern America. Most things must be seen to be believed, but America is almost incredible, indescribable, irreconcilable with herself. I have seen a good deal of her, I suppose; I am tempted to an excursion into the guidebook, to say something of Pittsburgh, smoky, sullen; of Dayton, that little city so monumental for its size; of Columbus, spacious and grey, with its broad, pleasant, green streets and its occasional gift of silence; of Indianapolis, almost as spectacular in its layout as Washington; of little Evansville, so elderly and quiet by the broad Ohio that flows in sleepy calm; of Omaha, big, grim, and wedded to utility; and yet again of Chicago, savage Chicago, where during the short space of twenty-two months sixteen policemen were murdered on duty, vainglorious Chicago, where Mayor Thompson announces to the world on his posters: "Boost Chicago! We lead the world as a rail centre! Forty-seven roads! A train a minute!" It is with reluctance that I part from Chicago and its mayor. They go together; Balzac would have been interested in them.

As soon as you go West, leaving behind scraps of Boston, a few houses in Philadelphia, the green beauty of Washington, and jewelled Manhattan, you are in a country where the towns are all alike. In the centre of a town, or in its suburbs, nothing will tell you whether you are in Ohio or in Iowa. You find the same quadrangular layout, the same houses, the same stores, lunching places, and chapels. In the suburbs, the same timber bungalows. This is easily explained by the fact that most cities in the Middle West and West were founded within fifty years of one another by people who were moving westward, who naturally built the new cities in the image of those they were leaving behind. Moreover, these were not rich people, but pioneers struggling with every possible difficulty, limited materials, expensive labour, bad transport. They had no time for beauty; also they were immigrants from the East, among whom the aspiration to beauty, which vaguely informed the mind of the workman in the Gothic and even the Georgian period, did not exist; the aspiration to beauty is a thing which arises slowly among young dreamers, who are laughed at by their families and their fellow townsmen, but who eventually have their own way. So the cities are unbeautiful, and only of late years, when wealth accumulated, has the aspiration to beauty begun to show itself in the shape of capitols and universities. It is not always successful, but the spirit is there; the



grey, uniform cities of America are merely the fore-runners of a new architecture.

But I do not want to discuss architecture. Deucalion flung stones to make men, but in America it is the men who have flung the stones, and perchance they will make gods. The American child is to me a greater puzzle than the American adult. I cannot see how the emotional American, dominated by moral impulses, develops out of the shrewd and hard American child. It is almost inhuman. It hates to be fondled; it seldom kisses an adult; it wholly differs from the emotional, enthusiastic English child, which hurls itself upon the people it likes and inflicts upon them sticky embraces. It does not give itself; it knows what it wants and takes it with strange brutality. If this applied only to the female children, I could understand it, for something of this survives in the American girl, before marriage and misfortune have turned her into a human being; but the male American child shows only the hardness of the American man, not the gentleness and tenderness which make him so attractive. This may come from the close contact between the American child and its parents; it lives with them, is of them; it is treated seriously; therefore, it does not look upon the adult as a god. Notably, in the well-to-do classes, there is no children's hour, say half past five, when the anxious prisoners of the nursery are allowed, trembling with excitement and with awe, to enter the holy presence of the grown-ups. It is no fun being an American

child ; one grows up without idols, and one must make some for oneself, since mankind at all ages lives only by error.

The hard child suggests the hard home, which is characteristic of America. I visited many houses in the United States, and, except among the definitely rich, I found them rather uncomfortable. They felt bare, untenanted ; they were too neat, too new ; they indicated that the restaurant, the theatre, the cinema were often visited ; one missed the comfortable accumulation of broken screens, old fire irons, and seven-year-old volumes of the *Illustrated London News*, which make up the dusty, frowsy feeling of home. The American house is not a place where one lives, but a place where one merely sleeps, eats, sits, works. You will say that makes up home life, but it does not ; there is something else, which can arise only out of a compound of dullness, boiled mutton, an ill-cut lawn, a dog, a cat, and some mice to keep the cat amused. I cannot explain it better than that, and Americans may not understand what I mean, although any English person will. Leaving aside the homes of the working class, which are much the same all the world over—*viz.*, miserable spaces where a young wife is by poverty, child-bearing, and male neglect turned into an old woman by the time she is thirty, I suspect that what affects the American home is the scarcity of the slave class which Europe calls domestics. Human beings cannot make their own comfort ; they are too lazy ; if they are compelled to

choose between a comfortable household of which they must do the work, and shop-gazing or cinema-going, they will seldom choose the home. All comfort depends on slavery, and the European domestic servant is a slave—perhaps well paid, perhaps well treated, perhaps even independent, but a slave, attendant upon the home of the master for one hundred and fifty-six hours a week out of one hundred and sixty-eight. America lacks that class; therefore, she has efficiency, but she has not comfort. Indeed, she has ceased to care for comfort. You discover this particularly in the hospitals, of which I visited three. No attempt was made to procure flowers for the patients; there were no hand fans for fevered brows; the lights were not shaded to the eyes; in hot weather ventilation was bad unless the windows were kept open, which meant that the blinds flapped; the nurses were self-complacent and official; everything was well done technically; the surgery was audacious, the learning immense—but it was not comfortable. The American attitude is: “You are ill. We will dose you until you are well,” just as, addressing a boiler: “You are out of order. We will overhaul your rivets and bolts.” It makes one long for the European sister of charity. She is pathetically incompetent; her finger nails are not aseptic, but she can smile and stroke a headache away.

Perhaps I was wrong to say that America has no slave domestic class. She has the married woman. In an earlier chapter I suggested that the American

married woman is sweated. She is so, particularly on the farms, where she is sacrificed to the financial ambitions of her husband. Mark Leland Hill Odea has written a terrifying little play about that, where the farmer's wife is driven mad with hysteria because her husband continues to put money into the farm; he leaves her to wear her old body out, cleaning and cooking, and on the anniversary of her wedding day refuses her a plate-washing machine which shall spare her poor old hands; instead, he buys yet more agricultural plant that shall increase his fortune. Again, in the *Pictorial Review* of December, 1920, we find the tragic story of another farmer's wife who, after many years, inherits six hundred dollars, and for the first time has a chance to give her family Christmas presents; her money is taken away by her husband, who with it buys six tombstones. I suppose that sort of thing happens in Europe too, but in Europe it is less shocking, because there most people are in need, whereas in America the farmers are not in need, but in an hysterical state of financial ambition. Some of those farmers might quite properly buy their wives tombstones on their wedding day.

It is horrible and it is splendid. It is part of the picture of the American energy which keeps the shops in the towns open till nine and ten o'clock at night, including Saturdays and in some cases Sundays. There is a fury of production and a fury of spending; there is an intoxication in the air which at first

terrifies the stranger and soon influences him. I felt it myself a few weeks after arriving. I had never cared much for money before, holding my little European ideas of a comfortable life and pleasant conversation, but by degrees, as I took contact with the Americans, those bersekers of commerce, I found myself wanting an automobile, like them, a big banking account, like them, and a bigger banking account, like them; I learned to smoke expensive cigars, like the Italian plate layers, and to say, "It's only five dollars," instead of, "A guinea, that's a bit thick." Something gets into you; you grow discontented; you haven't got enough; you fight for it; you make harder bargains; in your armchair you don't think of vague things as your languid gaze follows the tobacco smoke, but, instead, you ask yourself, "I wonder whether by saying nothing and waiting a day I could squeeze another five hundred dollars out of that deal?" Competition and example seize the stranger; he falls to savage desire; his cupidity, his secretiveness, his resourcefulness—all that develops. In ten months I felt how America forges and tempers the soft iron of Europe into chilled steel.

This is not an attack; it is grudging admiration, for I confess that I took a certain pleasure in the struggling ferocity, the haste, the careless collection of wealth which make up American life. Only one asks oneself, What is this leading to? America is so much in a state of formation that she has not yet acquired what I



suppose one may call poise. She has no leisured class, the class which unconsciously and often in a hostile spirit promotes beauty by providing a market for the arts. The capitalistic class of America is beginning consciously to pursue beauty and to give its patronage to the arts, but if you search for beauty you seldom find it; it is a thing which happens, which flourishes in spite of difficulties. The beauty which you capture grows domesticated; like a tiger long imprisoned in a cage, it forgets how to spring. This applies also to the pursuit of culture, the impulse to knowledge, of which the American women's clubs are a magnificent example. The cultural impulse of America is still on the surface because it leaves the habits of the individual what they were. Culture is not knowledge, it is not information, it is not even good manners: Sir Pitt Crawley in *Vanity Fair* is drunken and boorish, but a gentleman all the same. True culture is one's father's culture more than one's own. It is not how one thinks that matters, but the way one lives, and, though America is thinking much more and more clearly than does Europe, she is still living in the middle-class way of 1860. She is laying down the road to intellectual emancipation, but she has only just begun to travel it. Also the acquisitiveness of the pioneer is still struggling against the efflorescent culture of the universities. Every magazine is choked with advertisements of schools which teach salesmanship or train you to become a convincing business speaker. The appeal is generally

monetary, and seldom cultural. Knowledge is being offered in terms of commercial power, not in terms of pure knowledge.

I know that this prevails also in Europe, but it prevails in a different way; there is less ambition, less contest. There is more ease; something that one may describe as a static harmony of life. The difference cannot be better stated than it was to me by an American who said: "You will never understand us until you get this clear. If an Italian in Italy owns a successful hotel the only thing he will want is to go on running that hotel successfully, and when he dies to leave it to his son or his daughter's husband. But the American (or Italian-American) will be miserable unless by the time he is forty-five he controls two or three hotels; his son will look upon himself as a failure unless in the end he is president of a corporation controlling a chain of hotels from coast to coast." This seems to be ideally true, and it is easily explained—democracy explains it to a certain extent; whereas in Europe, and particularly in England, the desire of an ambitious man is to bear a title, in America, where he cannot obtain a title, the only possible distinction is wealth. Therefore, he struggles for wealth as a European struggles for social recognition. But that is a minor cause, because the struggle for wealth in America is infinitely more savage than is in Europe the struggle for distinction. There is something else, and that something is seldom taken into

account. The true cause is found within the boundless resources of America. Fifty years ago most of America was untouched. Within a single century most of the coal, iron, and oil deposits, also the wheat fields, have been brought to bear. Most of the great fortunes are a couple of generations old; they were made easily, almost fortuitously. They were not made slowly and cautiously as they were in Europe by generations which had time to grow used to being just a little richer than the generation before; great American fortunes arose like mushrooms, like colossal mushrooms which overhung the landscape. So the poorer pioneer said to himself: "Why should I not do what these others have done so quickly, so easily? The resources are there." That is the point: in America the resources were there, while in Europe they were not. European resources were developed slowly, over about two thousand years; American resources were developed in a night. Thus the European learned that there was little room for his ambition and turned to easy living; the American learned that there was the widest room for the wildest ambition, and turned to the inflamed life. The American is no more desirous, no more ruthless, no more money-grubbing than any other kind of man; after all, he is merely any other kind of man. He is the creature of magnificent circumstances, the child of endless opportunity. He has, in a sense, inherited the world; it is natural that he should exploit his heritage.

It is a platitude to say that one learns most about mankind in the police courts. It is also not quite a truth, for surely men do not lie quite as much outside as inside those courts; but one does learn something of the psychology of the nation. One learns it from the judges. Their way of doing things is the way in which people like them done. I have seen a number of cases tried, and nearly all yield a conclusion. Here are three. In the first a man was charged with indecency. Instead of sending him to jail, the magistrate ascertained that he was sick, probably feeble-minded, so he sent him to the workhouse for observation. Also, he asked him what fine he could pay. The accused said fifty dollars, and finally confessed that he could raise a hundred dollars. The magistrate then fined him a hundred and fifty dollars, "to force him to work." This seemed to me humane and burlesque. One likes the idea of fining a man only a figure which he can meet, but one discerns muddled thinking in finding a man sick, presumably irresponsible, and then fining him. What is interesting is the humane desire to discover by medical examination whether the prisoner was responsible.

The second case was that of a motorist charged with having passed a street car on the wrong side. The magistrate put back the case, gave the prisoner a copy of the traffic laws, told him to sit down and study them, and to come back for examination in two hours. If he failed in any answer he would be fined fifty dollars; if

he was perfect, he would be let off with twenty dollars. This seems to me perfect justice, for it repairs while it punishes.

The third case led to different conclusions. It was a matrimonial quarrel, where a wife charged her husband with assault; another couple was mixed up with the case. As I listened to them I felt that they were all liars. Perhaps they were. What was interesting was the behaviour of the attorneys, who disputed loudly, unrebuked by the magistrate, and made pandemonium in the court. When the magistrate began to sum up against the defendant, his attorney had the audacity to interrupt . . . and the magistrate was weak enough to say he would go on with the case. A little later, the magistrate prepared to discharge the defendant. This was met by a violent protest from the plaintiff's attorney . . . upon which the magistrate again resumed the hearing. Ultimately he discharged the defendant. Absolute Gilbert & Sullivan; no Englishman could avoid being shocked by the complete contempt shown by everybody for the solemnities of the law. For a tithe of such conduct the attorneys would have been turned out of an English court. I have seen this happen in several places. I have seen a state attorney address a witness while sprawling on a table. The judges never exact respect for themselves; they make their sittings into social parties; they seem weak, and it may be that they are too human. One of them has carried familiarity so far as to dice for the fine with



the prisoner. (In Chicago; the prisoner lost.) All this offends, but in reality it should not offend, as it means only that humanity has perhaps gone too far, except that it brings the law into contempt, makes the law uncertain. The weak judge who allows himself to be bullied into an acquittal is the same judge who would give a fifteen years' sentence for a crime deserving twelve months. The weak are always the violent, and, in that sense, American justice is as liable to human excess as it is capable of human tenderness. But in the main it is informed by the sympathetic spirit which has led North Dakota to grant illegitimate children rights to the property of their father equal to that of his legitimate issue.

A similar impression arises from institutions such as the Domestic Relations Court, which is primarily intended to settle as amicably as possible difficulties inside the family. It works in conjunction with a department of social service, and handles the cases which the department cannot settle. And it handles them with the broad humanity which characterizes this side of America. For instance, I saw a case dealt with where a wife was demanding from her husband support which he refused on the plea that she insisted on making a home for her mother; the mother-in-law made trouble between them. The judge dealt with this case as a familiar friend. He first pointed out to the man that his mother-in-law was old and in need, and that somebody must take care of her; but he also suggested

to the wife that her husband had the first right to the privacy of his home, and that she must take his needs into account as well as those of her mother. Finally, instead of sentencing the man to pay so much a week, and evicting the mother-in-law, which would have been the strict solution of the case, the judge sent the husband and wife to discuss his remarks in his chambers. They came out later with a treaty of peace; the man agreed to support, and his wife agreed to make arrangements with another member of the family to take in her mother. A little later the judge settled two cases of nonsupport of a wife by inducing the man to give the home another chance for a fortnight, and then to come to court again. In a similar case, where the man was out of work, the judge brought the parties together and undertook to provide a job for the man. The most impressive case, however, was that of a girl of fifteen, feeble-minded and pregnant by a man who was willing to marry her. Instead of following the obvious wooden course, and letting the man off on condition that he married the girl, the judge decided that at the time she was unfit to marry, and that there was no point in upholding morals against eugenics. He therefore placed her under medical observation, intending to deal with her on the medical report alone. If she was proved feeble-minded, he would send her into a home, but he refused to be a party to the bringing forth of probably imbecile children. All this seems to me admirable; it is more than human; it is sensible, and

it represents the most enviable side of American humanitarianism.

One sees most of American humanity when one visits the remedial institutions. I saw two of these in St. Louis, one shameful, the other admirable. The first was the Children's House of Detention, a dirty, gloomy prison where the children are imprisoned until they are tried in their special court. I don't think they are happy. They are kept together and do not seem to fear the officials; they are examined and looked after physically—but the greyness of the place! The ugly tables and the poor food; the mug of water and the piece of bread laid on the table without a plate! This for children who have not been tried, and are therefore not guilty. That is a bad survival, and St. Louis has every reason to be ashamed of its house of detention. On the other hand, it is a piquant contrast to observe its treatment of the boys who have been found guilty. For them St. Louis has a farm, at Bellefontaine, which exhibits none of the insensibility of the industrial schools of England. Here no prison bars, no watchmen, no measures against escape at night, except the removal of day clothes. A gifted superintendent has done a great deal to prevent the place from turning into an institution. There are no uniforms; the dining room is painted white, decorated with flowers, pictures, and flags. Three hours a day are given to school, four or five to agriculture, two to recreation within the bounds of the estate. The

tragedy of Bellefontaine is that the boys stay there only six months to two years, and then go back to the bad old homes which made their crimes. It is to the honour of St. Louis that one regrets that its delinquent boys cannot up to manhood be kept in its institution.

In other words, America is really trying to cure, to reform, and not merely to punish. You see this at its maximum in Sing Sing prison. As you travel along the lovely wooded hills of the Hudson you prepare for cells and grey gloom, but as you reach the prison you hear a band and you see men marching. Later you ask whether those men evolving in the large and tidy walled space were marching to dinner; you are told that they were marching more or less of their own accord, for exercise, behind the band they organize and manage themselves. Then you discover that their uniform is not entirely uniform; that they can wear part of their own clothes, have tobacco and daily papers sent in; that five times a month they may receive three visitors, making fifteen, and that they can talk to them in a large room, uninterrupted by officers, unseparated by the terrible grille of the past. You go into the workshops where they work an ordinary eight-hour day, making shoes, brushes, mattresses, or at printing, etc. There are no officers in the workshops; the convicts run their own discipline. In the dining room also no officers, but again the men's own discipline. They may talk; they are not, as in England, treated as dumb brutes. You discover the prison club (the Mutual Welfare



League), games, movie shows, a monthly paper that was edited, published, and printed within the prison under the editorship of Mr. C. E. Chapin, a prominent journalist, now serving a life sentence. You go round; you hear the warden address the prisoners personally; they reply without fear or servility. Those who are not at work move about freely in the vast prison; others practise baseball. The essence of Sing Sing is represented by two mottoes—*self-government* and *no officers*. The idea is to thrust upon the convicts the maximum amount of personal responsibility, which prevents them from feeling outcast, and maintains their individuality for the time when they will return to the outer world. That is why there are no officers in the workshops, why the officers are unarmed, while the prisoners freely handle piping and knives. They are trusted; they understand that they must go through with this, that escape is very difficult; so many are allowed comparative freedom in the neighbourhood of the prison under the languid supervision of a lonely guard. Breakaways are very few. I suppose the reactionary will say, "Very pretty; this means that you are treating criminals as honest men would like to be treated." That is absurd. Even in Sing Sing, model prison though it be, there is not much laughter; stone walls do make a prison, however much an enlightened civilization may try to prevent it. Before dismissing the humane effort of Sing Sing, the reactionary should ask himself whether he would like to lead the life of

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those men. It is a hard place, and behind the benevolence stand force, restraint, and a ready weapon. But all this is hidden as well as may be, so that the convict may feel comparatively free, be given a chance to acquire the capacities of a trade, the powers of a free man, pending the time when he will regain the privileges of freedom. Sing Sing represents one of the most beautiful sides of the American character, the capacity of the strong man to understand the weak, the desire to give the weak man a fair deal, the desire to make him efficient again, to restore him to decency; in other words, to rescue an American from evil courses and to reabsorb him into the American community.

After leaving Sing Sing I thought of the English prisons, of the periods of solitary confinement, where the convict sees no human face, hardly that of a warder; of the gangs on Dartmoor, watched by a guard with a rifle. I thought of our prisoners cut off for years from the activity of the world, and then tossed back to wander here like lost children, until they meet some one who entices them back to evil courses, because that is all the English prison has fitted them for. Then again I thought of the American prison, and was ashamed of my country.

I wonder whether the fine institutions of America are the work of politicians or whether they were imposed by an intelligent public opinion upon representatives who threw them as sops to local idealism. One cannot help contrasting those

institutions with the evil repute of the American politician, and especially with the contempt which most Americans openly express for their governors. Perhaps the American politician is maligned; very likely he is corrupt, but maybe all politicians, taken in the mass, are corrupt. If you talk to an educated Frenchman, Italian, Spaniard, or Portuguese he will tell you that his politicians take bribes. The European papers contain as many scandals and exposures of people in high places as do the American papers. As for England, she seems very virtuous, and the superficial observer may think that the level of political morality is higher in England than anywhere else in the world. Only, when one begins to understand English public life, one discovers that, as usual, every man has his price, and that whereas in most parts of the world you can get a man to do something mean by paying him a sum of money, in England you can bring him down to the vilest level by inviting him to lunch with a duke. And so there is little to choose between corruption by contract in the United States of America and corruption by snobbery in the home of ancient liberties which we call England.

What is interesting in America, as opposed to England, is the common assumption that the politician is a corruptionist. In many conversations with Americans I have been told stories which I refuse to reprint because they seem too wild. I have continually been told that the American law courts are corrupt,

that many of the judges can be bought, and that where they cannot be bought political pressure can be put on them. I do not say this is true or untrue; I know nothing about it personally, but what interests me is the fact that America *says these things* openly, whereas the Englishman looks upon his Parliament as the abode of most of the virtues; (he has been changing his mind since big business took over the British Empire, round about 1917); also he becomes painfully sentimental when he talks of British justice. The American seems to have no illusions about the state; indeed, when one has read the American newspapers for a few months, and seen them filled with extraordinary tales of graft taken by high employees of corporations, by district attorneys, sanitary trustees, etc., one begins to believe that American rule is founded on graft; one has to reason with oneself to realize that the youngest and richest nation in the world cannot be erected on such a foundation.

For my part, I suspect that the situation is actually this: most of the public officials are elected; therefore they have to truckle to local opinion, for they hope to be re-elected. This must mean corrupt favouritism. In many cases, however, the situation is worse because the public official not only has to be re-elected by a body of constituents, but he also is the nominee of either the Democratic or the Republican party. He will naturally cleave to his party; its managers will have influence upon him; if he does not satisfy them, he will not be

renominated. It is too much to ask of a human being that he should resist an influence such as that. Lastly, the public official is, in America, very ill paid; many state governors before the war received less than six thousand dollars, and their pay has not been raised commensurately with the rise in the cost of living. If you compare rank with rank you will find that the American judge is paid about a quarter of what the English judge receives, and this in a country where the cost of living is twice as high as in England. What is the result? It is not necessarily corruption. Indeed, the American judge deserves a tribute which he does not always receive for resisting corruption offered to poverty. I think it was Oscar Wilde who said that "anybody could be virtuous on ten thousand pounds a year." The most supreme of the American judges has never received such a salary, but he has been virtuous all the same.

A more serious result is that in a civilization such as the American, where wealth absolutely predominates, where a man's status is largely (though not entirely) defined by his fortune, the rewards of office are so small that public positions tend to attract only those men who would not otherwise make a very good living, or men who are already rich, and take office out of vanity.

Nearly all the educated Americans I spoke to about this entirely agreed with me, but the subject did not excite them. Everybody acknowledged graft every-

where, with a way of suggesting, " It's a pity, but it can't be helped." I suspect that America does not worry about graft because she is a pioneer country, because she is still developing her immense resources, and especially because the opportunities are so vast that every man tells himself that he has quite enough to do looking after his business without wasting time on the reform of the public services. He agrees that much time and money are wasted by corruption, but he figures out the situation and tells himself that the loss entailed on him personally is much less than the loss he would make if he were to devote time to public affairs. So he lets public affairs go, gets as rich as he can ; often he harbours the private opinion that if he comes to a law-suit the best thing he can do is to be rich. To be rich, he thinks, will serve him better than to be a little poorer and come before an entirely reliable court. I do not mean that he proposes to bribe the law, but he proposes by his wealth to avail himself of every delay, of every legal method, and to wear out his antagonist. To do that he must be rich ; also he finds getting rich a more cheerful pursuit than purifying the public services.

You see this political indifference more clearly still when you consider the treatment afforded to the Socialist party in America. One quite understands that during the war the American government should have dealt very vigorously with those who opposed its activities, who tried to impede recruiting, and in



some cases plotted with the enemy. I take no sides in this matter, except so far as to say that the leaders of most of the Allies cannot escape their share of responsibility for the crime that is unjustly imputed to the Kaiser alone. I quite understand that when a government has gone to war it can hold only the opinion of Decatur, "My country, right or wrong." But what is interesting is the indifference of public opinion to the treatment of the Socialists after the war. In the fear of revolution a great many things were done which did not accord with our conception of the habeas corpus. I have before me a photograph of a letter addressed to the editor of *The Leader*, Milwaukee, stamped October, 1920. Across the envelope is impressed, "Mail to this address undeliverable under Espionage Act." Therefore, nearly two years after the armistice, a newspaper is refused its mail because its views are disagreeable to the government! The letter is reproduced in the New York *World*, which very honourably protests against this suppression of a normal public right, the delivery of correspondence. But I never heard club or private talk about this. This flagrant attack on citizen rights seemed to interest nobody. And here are a number of other cases which also occurred in October, 1920. At Mount Vernon the Rev. John Haynes Holmes, Miss Rose Schneidermann, candidate for Senator, and Mr. Norman Thomas were arrested for attempting to read the Constitution of the United States and explaining the objects of the Ameri-

can Civil Liberties Union. This because they were speaking without a permit from the mayor, who had declined to give permits to speakers. On October 12th, at Norwich, Mrs. Glendown Evans and Mr. Albert Boardman were arrested for speaking in breach of the orders of the mayor. In the same month Judge John C. Knox decided that membership of the Communist party was sufficient cause for deportation. (It is interesting to observe that Judge Anderson, at Boston, ruled the opposite.) Again, in the same month, at New York, the Socialists were denied the privilege of choosing poll clerks for election districts in which their party had polled the greatest or the next to greatest vote cast at the last election. All these cases are fairly startling, but most remarkable is that of the five Socialists, members of the New York Legislature, who in March, 1920, were excluded on the plea that they had been seditious. A minority, duly elected by the voters, was excluded by the majority. The five outlaws stood again, and in September, 1920, were all five again elected by their constituents. You would have thought that this settled the matter, since they were twice endorsed by the electorate, but the New York Legislature accepted two of the members and re-excluded three. This was not a party vote, for on the second occasion 73 Republicans and 17 Democrats voted for exclusion, while 28 Republicans and 17 Democrats voted against.

I submit that, coming two years after the war, this

is a rather startling situation. It justifies one in suggesting that liberty of speech and of thought was brought very low during the four years of the Wilson administration; so far there is no definite guarantee that these liberties will be restored under the new government. This because nobody bothers about it. All the people who were arrested for expounding Socialistic views were doing this openly, and in virtue of the rights that belong to all citizens in a free republic. I heard of no case where a Republican or Democratic speaker was arrested; the Socialists were arrested because they wanted to alter the form of the State. But it is perfectly legitimate to alter the form of the State if you don't like it; it is perfectly legitimate to try to convince your fellow men that your views are right and that they should join with you in making them prevail. Supposing a party were to arise which wanted to make it compulsory on all of us to paint ourselves blue (basing this on the excellent historical precedent of Queen Boadicea), you might think it silly, but all the same the pro-blues would be entitled to recruit members for their party. Any suppression of opinion is tyranny. In the particular case of the New York Legislature, which excluded the five Socialists, it is interesting to observe that the protests against this high-handed action soon died down. The exclusion did not form a topic for conversation at lunch; if it was referred to at all, the general attitude was that it served the Socialists jolly well right, and it was hoped

that this would "learn" them to be Socialists. Which is all very well, but if we accept that a majority may deprive a minority of its constitutional rights, then no man will be safe—unless he belongs to the majority. If, owing to unfortunate idealism or lack of political suppleness, he happens to find himself in the minority, he will be in trouble. These suppressions and exclusions practised by a capitalistic government absolutely parallel the action of the Bolsheviki in Moscow. The Bolsheviki are charged with having disfranchised all the people who did not agree with them, and for that are severely attacked; the capitalistic parties of America in these particular cases have been doing just the same thing. They must not expect to be measured by a different rule.

I am not making an impertinent comparison between the American and the British methods. It is true that England allows almost unlimited freedom of speech, printing, and meeting, and that has a beautiful air of liberalism, but I suspect that the English governing class, which is wholly cynical and much more subtle than most people realize, has for a long time seen the advantage of letting people talk, and talk, and wear themselves away, and evaporate in talk. Where America represses, England swaddles. One of these days an English Prime Minister will try to smash the Socialist movement by offering peerages to the labour leaders and bishoprics to the Socialist clergymen. So I am not making a comparison; what I am observing is the

psychological reaction of the American mind to this political tyranny. It is a simple one; America does not bother, and she may be unwise not to bother, for suppression drives these movements into secrecy. During the Russian revolution of 1905 Pobiedonostzeff, a reactionary, said that an idea was more dangerous than dynamite; you can hide an idea, but you cannot kill it, and all that the system of repression can do is just that, to hide the idea. Reaction does not take the advice of Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, who once said that you cannot stop a storm by sitting on the barometer. Reaction is to-day trying to sit on the barometer, and I suspect that this is more dangerous than hanging the barometer outside Westminster Abbey, while the plaudits of English Liberalism resound. The American Communist party, organized in September, 1919, worked openly until January, 1920, when a number of arrests were made; then the party became illegal and began to work underground. There, I feel, lies such danger to American political stability as may exist. Political repression has created secret societies; so long as they are secret, so long will they be dangerous. Revolutionary and violent sections of the Socialist party never grow strong until repression forces them to work secretly, because the preaching of violence never rallies to their side anything but a small number of people. Violence is disagreeable to most of mankind because it is risky. Man likes violence well enough, but he understands that violence replies to



violence; he is not prepared to face that side of it. Therefore, free speech leads to moderation, because moderation makes recruits; on the other hand, limit the freedom of speech, you foster secrecy, sense of injury—above all, the romantic sense of outlawry; you produce groups of individuals who become more revolutionary because they feel outcast, who plot violence and more violence—because it is the dramatic thing to do.

I found very few people in America who cared at all about these things. The political apathy of America is extraordinary. There is no care for abstract rights, but only for individual rights. For instance, after the presidential election in 1920, day by day—not only in New York, but in Indianapolis, in Chicago, in other places—I tried to discover the total votes polled by the Farmer Labour party and by the Socialists. It was almost impossible to find out; at first I was told that these polls were so negligible that they were not worth printing; in the end I discovered that the Socialists had polled just under a million votes, and that Mr. Upton Sinclair alone had received twenty thousand in California, but I had to take trouble to find out, and I never met anybody else who wanted to know. To this day I do not know how many votes Mr. Christensen polled. Now a bright public opinion would want to know these things. Why it doesn't want to I am not certain. Perhaps it is the prevailing political cynicism which reigns in the country, a cynicism

which was summed up in an old English election song:

If we put the muddlers out,  
We put worse muddlers in.

Perhaps it is, as I have suggested before, that the American is much too busy with his personal affairs to trouble with those of the State, except, of course, as regards the cock fight of party against party. For it should be noted that when one charges the American with political apathy one must except the sporting side of the political contests. That is very definite. There is nothing apathetic in the way in which the white South votes Democrat because the negro votes Republican; in the disfranchisement of negroes by every kind of trick; in the Ku-Klux Klan proceedings. There is nothing languid in the 100-per-cent Americanism of the American Legion; nor in the anti-Catholic campaign of the "True Americans" in the South; nor in the keyhole activities, the witch-finding of the American Protective League. There is in America as much political violence as will keep even an Irishman busy, but it is a local, a sporting, a personal violence. It has nothing to do with general ideas. No doubt that is part of American regionalism, which has made the country as a whole so important and the State so slight in the mind of the citizens of what is less a great free republic than a great federation of free republics.

Though this suggestion may arouse protest, I do not feel sure that in America a war against England

would be unpopular. War in general has never been unpopular in America, though the inhabitants seem to hold the view that they are the most pacific of men. They are, so long as they get everything their own way, so long as their national honour, of which they are very jealous, is wholly respected, so long as they secure their position of international isolation, so long as the old continent keeps its hands off the new. The pacific record of the United States of America in the last century includes an expedition in Barbary, a war against England, a war against Mexico, a terrific civil war, a war against Spain. This record for a pacific nation is not at all bad. I do not suggest that Americans are born belligerents, but they might be if they were not so difficult to beat.

No doubt a certain kind of American who reads these lines will laugh aloud, and will vow that nothing could bring into conflict two nations whose common blood and community of tradition, etc.—and all that kind of thing. I would point out to him three things. One is that there is to-day much less community of blood between England and America than there was between England and Germany; the second is that community of blood is no guarantee against strife—the spectacle of family life should prove that point; the third is that while it might have been true a hundred years ago to talk of community of tradition between America and England, to do so to-day is merely hypocrisy or ignorance. During my journey in

America I met, especially in the East, many people who bore English or Scottish names, and whose families traced their pedigree right back to the early Puritans or Virginians; I also met many who did not bother about their pedigree, who were still very British in feeling and culture. They were all very friendly to England, and all shocked by the idea of war. One can broadly say that cultured America is pro-British. Only—what does cultured America matter? What does cultured anything matter anywhere in a world where more and more the bank balance and the political caucus alone have voices? As I went about, meeting these charming people, old Pennsylvanians, Bostonians, people of Vermont and Ohio, not many of them very rich, hardly any very active, most of them remote from New York and almost unaware of Chicago, I could not help feeling that here I was meeting not America, but surviving America, an America which for two reasons has ceased to mean anything—one, that it has not got richer while the Middle West did; the other, that it has withdrawn from, or been pushed out of, politics.

The divorce between culture and politics defines the Anglo-American danger. The old American families who made the Constitution have by degrees been driven out of politics, because the great mass of Irish, Slav, German, and Scandinavian immigrants preferred their own people as political bosses. Corruption followed, and the old American families, instead of staying in the political field, drew their ladylike skirts away. Some-

times even now they make a feeble effort and stand for political office. As a rule, they are beaten by a recent O'Brien; they are beaten because they are not tackling the job. They seem to think it enough to put upon their poster a name from the *Mayflower*, but they do not join the political clubs, do not enter the ward committees; they stay grand and aristocratic like the English country gentlemen, and are surprised when they are not elected. The English country gentleman can afford to do that (though he will not long be able to afford to) because he is addressing Englishmen; the American gentleman cannot do that because he is not addressing Americans. He is addressing a European constituency as mixed as Constantinople; he is addressing poverty, ambition, religious strife, race hatred, resentment against the oppression of Kaiser and Tsar, diseases brought about by centuries of hunger; he is addressing everything except the broad comfort of Old America and its simple rectitudes. Naturally he does not get in, and the control of politics falls to another type of man.

What that type is matters only in so far as it is much more subservient to the electors than would be the gentleman of Connecticut or Carolina. Those electors—who are they? During the last half century America has admitted thirty million Europeans, of whom perhaps a sixth were English or Scotch. The great mass are Slav, Irish, or Italian. Those people have no links with England; their traditions are different, also their



way of life, their religion, their literature. They are intelligent, commercially successful, but there lives in their heart no sentiment for the fatherland over the water. And among them, animating them, embodying the protest of Europe, are the Irish, animated with hatred against England by all the injustice and oppression they have suffered at her hands, filled with memories of Protestant tyranny and irreconcilable with the beef eaters, because they themselves grew up on potatoes. The Irish serve as the cement of the immigrant nationalities; they bring the political aptitude, the faculty for organization, and the hate which binds men together so much better than does love. That is what one must realize in considering political America. The voting power has slipped away from the old Americans, and the new Americans are not Americans.

I suppose I shall be told that America is capable of absorbing any man who enters, whether Syrian or Laplander. Regarding my first chapter on Boston I received an indignant letter from a New-Englander in Chicago who told me that I did not know what I was talking about and that the old Puritan traditions had imposed themselves upon the immigrants. It made one laugh, coming from a town where nine women were murdered in one week, where bank messengers are held up in daylight, where moral scandals overflow from the hush cupboard into the newspapers. The truth is that up to a certain point America was capable of acting as a

melting pot. But there is a limit to what a population can absorb, and though, no doubt, up to the middle of last century the old American stock was strong and numerous enough to absorb the immigrant, now the immigrant is the majority; by degrees it will absorb the American stock instead of being absorbed by it. You can see that in the foreign quarters of the American cities, where, block by block, the nation changes, where you find areas *exclusively* tenanted by, let us say, Italians, who have imported their restaurants, their dishes, their kind of barber, their newspaper, their church. You see it still more in the public lists of marriages. You do not often find Carlo Ferrari marrying Bella Jones. Carlo Ferrari is marrying Maria Sorino. He is keeping up a purity of race which makes absorption impossible. When you reflect that immigration this year will probably exceed American births, and that many of these births are foreign births, you will agree that the balance is tipped.

In those populations you find a field where can grow hostility to any nation. Moreover, the exploitation of hatred of England stands almost where it did in 1776. You see this come out in the most amazing ways. For instance, during the presidential election, the Farmer-Labour party had a committee room on Eighth Avenue, at 135th Street. Outside stood a poster which read, "Cox and Harding suit Wall Street and England. Do they suit you?" I interrogated a friend about this, and asked him how the Farmer-

Labour party, practically a radical party, which must have some international leanings, could do such a thing. He replied: "Oh, don't you bother about that. They've got nothing against England, but it's always a good election card to play." I think that reply fatal. Is it anything but fatal to hear that in America thousands of votes can be secured if you "play the card" of hostility to England? And yet it is true. There we must leave it; there is no room for a convention leading to an *entente cordiale*, because there are no issues. Maybe President Harding's court of arbitration may do something to arrest the difficulties which may arise. Possibly the removal of the Irish question, which has at last happened, may do something to change the atmosphere; but it is no use pretending that things are as they should be, for the awakening might be very unpleasant.

The first time I asked an American what he thought of prohibition I chanced upon a stranger in that particular city, who replied: "Oh, I'm for prohibition. Can you tell me where I can get a drink?" This reply seems to embody a good deal of the public feeling in the matter. Apart from a few people who need their drink, and are exasperated by the difficulties they encounter, nearly everybody in America thinks prohibition a very good thing for other people. It should be said in justice that a good many agree that it is good for them, though they don't like it, and that they are willing to stand it. It is generally said that

prohibition was brought about by political trickery, by the extension of a law instituted for war purposes, but that is not true. Prohibition is an old American institution which has been expanding by degrees, state by state, for a great many years. The war merely gave it the final impetus that enabled it to secure the necessary majority of two thirds, and therefore Federal application. Prohibition might not have come about if a referendum had been taken, but as the American Constitution does not provide for a referendum, it must be held that prohibition has not succeeded in two thirds of the states without the assent of a more than sufficient majority. Many people believe that prohibition will not last long, and that America will eventually return to some sort of liquor consumption, probably by the extension of the Volstead Act—*viz.*, by the raising of the quantity of alcohol in drinks to 3 or 4 per cent. They also believe that the enormous illegal traffic in liquor may bring prohibition into such contempt that it will die of itself. All this seems most unlikely, though liquor is obtainable in any quantity by anybody who can pay the price and who will take the trouble. For instance, in Boston, in October, 1920, in various hotels and bars, people were accosted by runners who offered to sell them drink; in the same city, in six and a half months, 13,246 people were arrested for public drunkenness, and 213 had to be admitted to hospital for alcoholic excess. The cause of this is certainly prohibition. Whereas in the old days a man could buy

a drink and leave the saloon, he now finds that difficult, but he can buy a bottle, take it home, and probably drink most of it. Complete figures are not available, but it seems that during 1920 one of the results of prohibition was to decrease the number of people who drank moderately, and to drive a certain number of moderate drinkers into the drunken ranks. It has also resulted in the preparation of noxious beverages, made partly of whisky and partly of wood alcohol; it has brought about a great revival of home brewing and home distilling; at one time the demand for stills was so heavy that the industry had to set up a waiting list. It has, to a certain extent, encouraged smuggling from Canada and Mexico. It has also created a class of enforcement agents, who are not numerous enough to do their work properly, and some of whom are necessarily corrupt. In other words, prohibition has left a great deal of room for evasion, and a great deal of evasion is going on now.

By the side of evasion also go substitutes. One of them is supposed to be drugs, but I doubt whether this peril is as formidable as is made out. The whisky habit and the cocaine habit are very different things; the first is convivial, the second solitary. If the people who talk of the drug peril had any opportunity of coming into contact with cocaine or morphia maniacs, they would know that the effect is quite different. It is indeed possible that a few drunkards have taken to cocaine because they had to have something, but, so far



as my observation goes, most of the people who drank moderately have taken to the soda fountain. Evasion of quite another kind is much more prevalent, and that is the patent medicine containing alcohol. I have before me the labels of two of these patent medicines. One of them contains 25 per cent of alcohol, the other 40 per cent; both are labelled to that effect. Now what is interesting is that neither of these medicines is designed for any specific disease; they are not supposed to do anything for you if you have rheumatism or fever. They are to be taken as a tonic if you feel tired, or depressed, and their pleasant taste is guaranteed. One cannot help being amused by that kind of thing. I took a dose of one of these medicines and found it very nice indeed. I felt very much better, and inclined to take a second dose. And so on.

As regards the results of prohibition, it is much too early to say anything precise. The wildest statements have been printed. For instance, in November, 1920, the superintendent of the Juvenile Protective Association read out statistics which seemed to show that cases of cruelty to wife and child had increased 238 per cent since prohibition arrived; similar figures seem to show a rise in childish delinquency, in immorality, in disorderly houses. One can find similar figures which absolutely contradict the situation, and both sets are as childish one as the other. We shall know nothing of the effects of prohibition for twenty years, and then we shall judge only by figures. The psycho-sociologist knows that

statistics are merely lies made respectable. My own belief is that in the United States of America liquor will practically disappear. Liquor is to a certain extent sustained by the unpalatable nature of the prohibition drinks; the beer is nothing but a ghost of the real beer; apple cider, loganberry juice, and such like are fit to make a school-treat sick. The only good prohibition drink is water. But the resources of industrial chemistry will by degrees produce the illusion we need. It is the only thing we need in life. Drink itself will go because it is not being given to the young generation. That is not only a question of shame, but a question of supply. As the stocks go down, as enforcement grows more rigid, drink will grow more and more difficult to obtain. The father will naturally keep it for himself, and a vague sort of shame will prevent him from introducing his son to liquor. So the young generation will grow up without it, not wanting what it does not know; by degrees, as the old drinking generation dies out, the only drunkards will be people afflicted by a new kind of depravity, who will drink whisky as they now snuff cocaine. They will be the exception rather than the rule. Whether this result is desirable is another question; for my part, I have always held that the ideal state is the one where there are least laws. I should prefer to think that the saloon system could be moralized and made more æsthetic; that education could by degrees teach the population to use instead of abusing, cheerful liquor. All this seems to be possible, and on

the whole I regret prohibition because it has done immense damage to conviviality. The entertainment of hard-worked people is difficult without the stimulus of drink. Prohibition dinner parties are very dull; a dinner party, after all, consists in bringing together people who don't like one another much, and encouraging them to bear with one another; that is what is called society. It is difficult to do that on iced water; it is perhaps easier in America, where people are frank and confidential; in England the social consequences would be frightful. We have been asked in England to choose between Giles free and Giles sober. I hope we shall not have to choose between Giles sober and Giles sulky.

In a sense, the prohibition problem is simplified by the growing Slavification and Latinization of the United States. For psychological reasons of a complex nature, it is the Anglo-Teutonic and Scandinavian peoples who carry the taste for drink. The objections to immigration may be considerable, but drunkenness is not one of them; the Jewish immigrant is particularly free from the craving for drink. This does not mean that the immigration problem is in America not a serious one. That is to say, it is or is not a serious problem according to the point of view you may hold. The American who wants to preserve the Old America, the America of Alexander Hamilton and Robert E. Lee, must look with horror upon the central and eastern European masses; the American who is willing to see

created an entirely new race should not be so greatly troubled. At present the old American still holds sway because of the sentimental support of literature and the press. It is not wonderful that public opinion should be agitated about the immigrant, for the speed of immigration is going up at an enormous rate. In January, 1920, nearly 25,000 came in; in June nearly 50,000; in September 86,000. Also, we are told by the Commissioner of Immigration that 10,000,000 of foreigners are waiting for ships to America, among them 2,000,000 or 3,000,000 Italians. Commissioner Wallis goes on to say (December, 1920) that Ellis Island is now handling 30,000 immigrants a week. These are terrific figures, and confirmation comes from so many sides that there is no reason to doubt them. The famine which reigns in central Europe, the wars which threaten Poland, the political oppressions which reign in Russia, Bohemia, the Trentino, the ruin which has overwhelmed Germany—all this is arrayed behind the immigrants in a drive of immense power. Living without security in a famished Europe, half of which has lost even hope, it is natural and inevitable that their desires should turn, half in material aspiration, half in idealism, to the great Republic of the West, where there are wealth, ease, happiness—where at last they will be at rest.

From the American point of view, however, the problem is not so easy. It is true that America wants labour, and America will continue to do so so long as

she continues to develop her soil with the ferocious haste which characterizes her. Only what America needs is the agriculturist. She does not want more recruits for the overcrowded cities; the trouble is that the immigrants on the whole prefer to crowd the towns, and do not readily move toward Dakota and Idaho. There is, of course, a powerful section of America which wants cheap city labour. All the sweat shops of America, particularly in the clothing trade, want to recruit humanity brought down to its lowest level of physical endurance, of human pride, something they can grind still finer, something that can just crawl enough to produce a profit. Those people will by influence and money do all they can to keep the gates open, but it may be that they are getting more than is safe for them, and that the masses they are recruiting create a problem which defeats their aim. What will eventually be done concerns the Americans and does not concern me. All I may do is to clarify the problem as I see it and to suggest to the American public that one of the two solutions imposes itself—either to restrict or exclude the immigrant; by degrees to assimilate the resident foreigner into the Anglo-American civilization; or to open the gates, to allow unrestricted immigration from any part of the world, and from these elements to compose a new race that will be a synthesis of all races. Both these ideals have their nobility; the second is perhaps the more attractive because it is the more novel. One cannot help being



curious of sociological experiments, and one would like to see the result of the fusion of all the peoples of the world about a new Tower of Babel. It might be rather hard on the Tower all the same!

As I come to the end of these impressions I wish they could have been conclusions, but ten months in a country is not much, however broadly one may have travelled it, whatever labour one may have given to the understanding of many kinds of men. One is confronted with such diversity, such contrasts, and especially such novelty. So I will let conclusions alone and say just this: America is a great country for a young man to get born in.

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